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THE NEW YORKER

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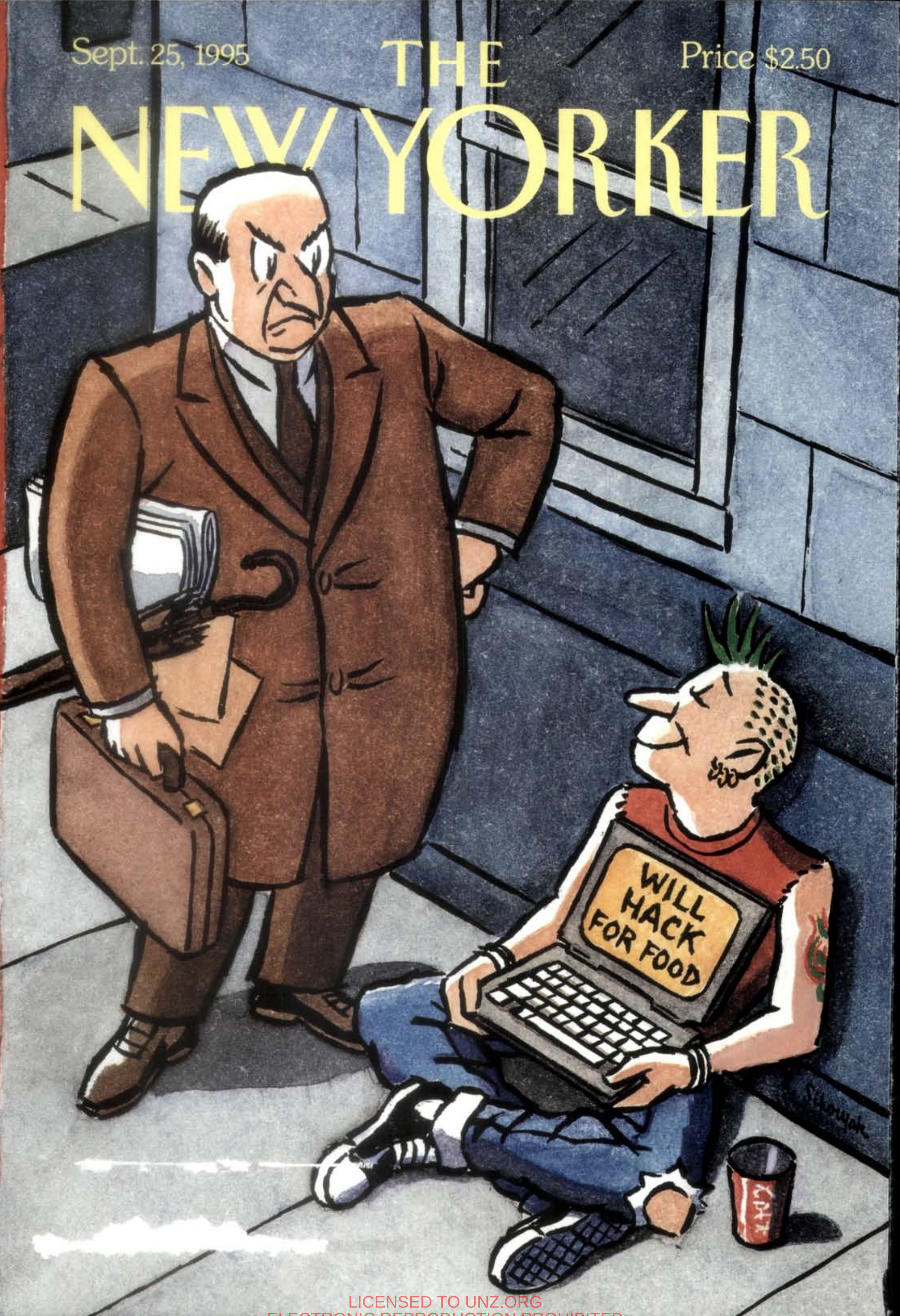
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THE NEW YORKER (ISSN 0028-792X), published weekly (except for four combined issues: the last week of December and the first week of January, the last two weeks of February, the last week of June and the first week of July, and the last two weeks of August) by The New Yorker Magazine, Inc., 20 W. 43rd St., N.Y., N.Y. 10036. Vol. LXXI, No. 29, September 25, 1995. Second-class postage paid at New York, N.Y., and at additional mailing offices. Authorized as second-class mail by the Post Office Department, Ottawa, Canada, and for payment of postage in cash. Canadian Publication Mail Sales Product Agreement No.190969. Canadian goods-and-services-tax registration number R123242885. Registered as a newspaper at the British Post Office. Subscription rates: In U.S. and possessions, one year, $36.00; two years, $60.00. In Canada, one year, $77.00 (includes G.S.T.). In Germany, one year is DM290-mail orders to: IP Internationle Presse, Distribution & Marketing GmbH, Waldstr. 70, D-63128 Dietzenbach, Germany. Other foreign, one year, $85.00, payable in advance.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to The New Yorker, Box 56447, Boulder, Colorado 80322. PRINTED IN U.S.A.

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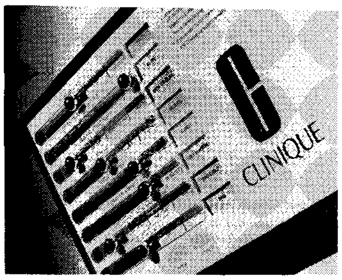

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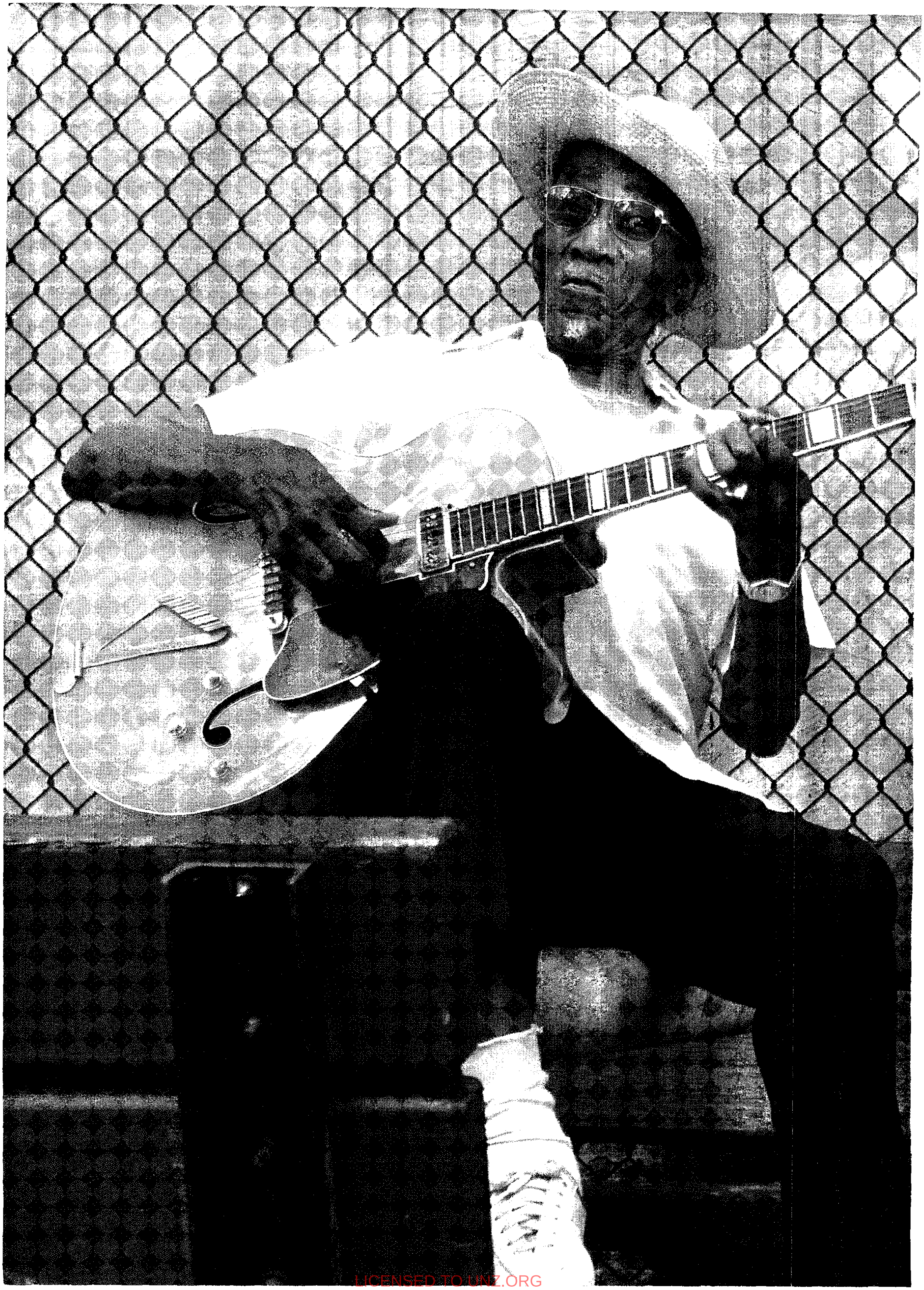

"After a while, nothing helped my knees. I had to have something done."

WALTER J. PERRY
NEW YORK, NEW YORK

Walter "The Buzzard" Perry says he was born to be a songwriter. In fact, he carried his guitar with him on the Italian front during World War II and serenaded his platoon. But 15 years ago, he started singing a different kind of blues.

It all began with an aching and swelling in his knees. Some days he couldn't stay at work, the pain was so bad. He even fell in the street and couldn't get up on his own. "I just stayed at home–shut in," he remembers. "It was awful."

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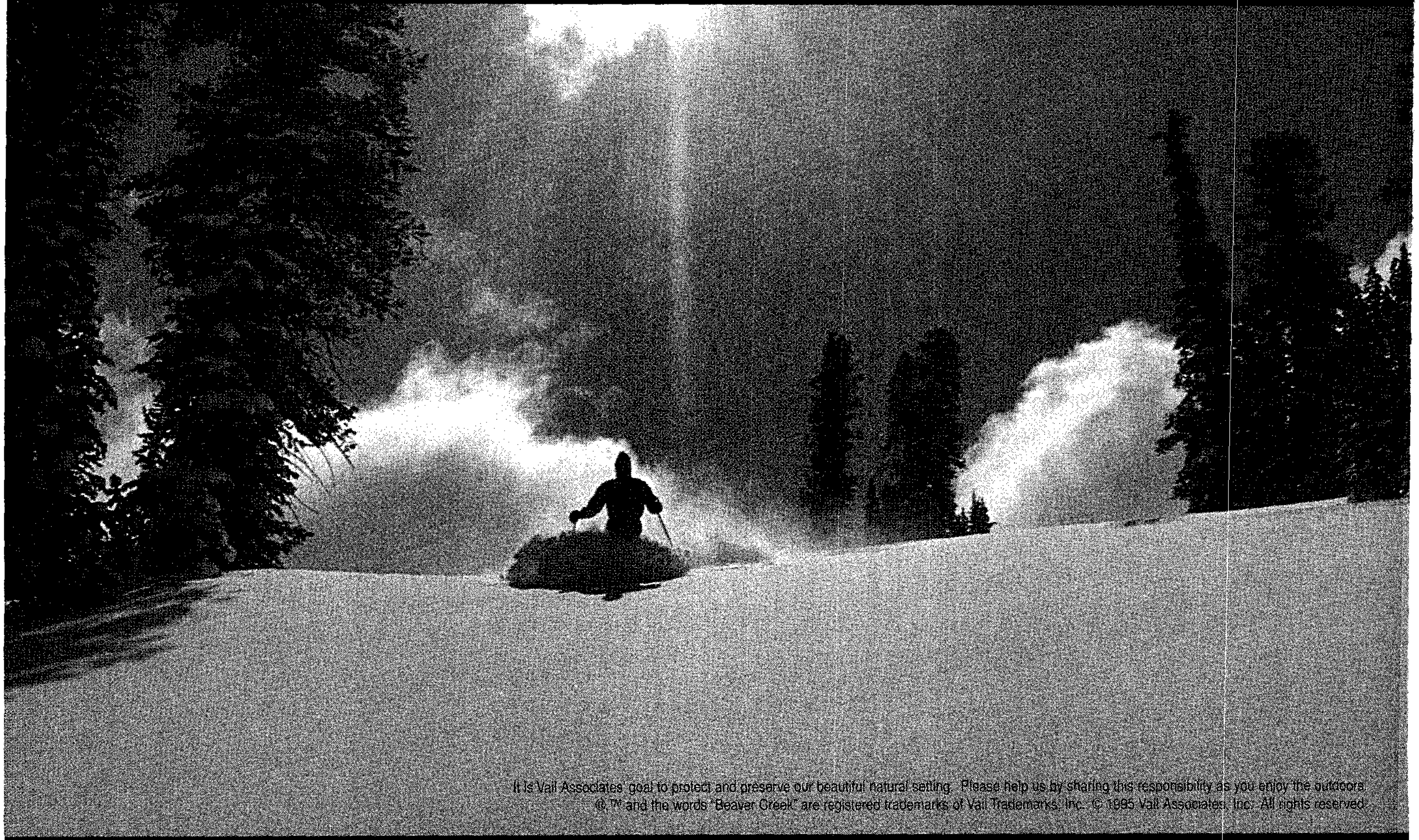

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COMMENT

MEDICINE SHOW

The Republicans' script leads them into trouble.

A YEAR ago, the Republicans were confident that they had got rid of the entire idea of overhauling the health-care system. "We've killed health-care reform. Now we've got to make sure our fingerprints aren't on it," declared Senator Bob Packwood, the Republican floor manager on health-care legislation (and an expert, albeit a clumsy one, on suppressing evidence). President Clinton's plan was undone in part by visions conjured up by its well-funded opponents—nightmares of citizens wrenched from their doctors and herded into faceless bureaucracies. In a twist of certain rough justice, the Republicans now find themselves tormented by the same subject. Furthermore, what they are proposing bears an uncanny resemblance to their caricature of what Clinton was supposedly trying to do to health care: downsize it, coerce it, and ration it.

The Republicans' balanced budget, which codifies their grand political strategy, depends upon huge cuts in Medicare. In order to pay for their $245-billion tax cut, they plan to scale back Medicare by $270 billion over seven years. Yet they do not want to offend older voters, who could swing Congress back to the Democratic Party. The Republicans' apprehensiveness in attempting to finesse this maneuver was apparent in Senate Majority Leader Bob Dole's mock-statesmanlike plea two weeks ago. While criticizing the White House for being the "captive" of "grim, zero-sum thinking," he begged them to remove the discussion of Medicare from partisan debate. If the Republicans cannot achieve their desired cuts in Medicare, they cannot get the tax cuts unless they scramble to slash elsewhere—squeezing more from Medicaid, another volatile issue, and thus setting the contesting intra-party factions and Presidential candidates loose on an uncharted budget battlefield.

The main Republican tactic now is to foster an atmosphere of apocalypse, by raising the cry that Medicare is headed for "bankruptcy." But the warnings of the program's imminent collapse are misleading. The idea of its going "bankrupt" is a technical bookkeeping concept that the Republicans have suddenly transformed into a central political one. On nine occasions since 1970, the trustees of the Hospital Insurance Trust Fund have

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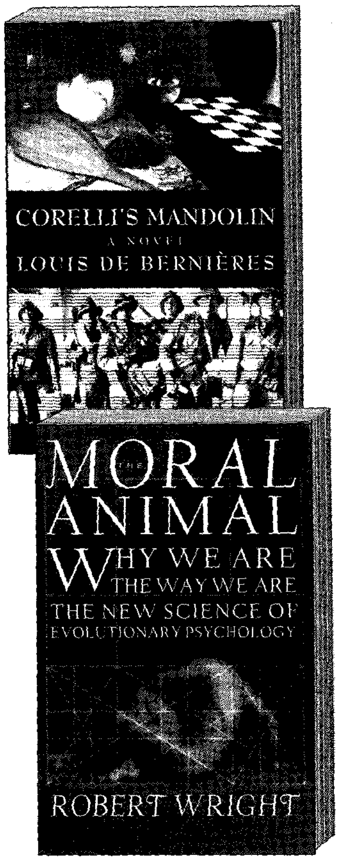
A rich and lyrical, heartbreaking and comic novel — "An exuberant mixture of history and romance, written with a wit that is incandescent."
—*Los Angeles Times Book Review*



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declared Medicare to be approaching "bankruptcy" within seven years, and each time it has been "saved" in a bipartisan manner without suffering any perceptible reductions in benefits. When the Fund's trustees issued this year's routine projection for bankrupty (in 2002, a year later than the one announced in 1994), the Republicans, who had not created a clamor over any previous projection, seized on it.

In June, the pollster Frank Luntz, whose research shaped the Contract with America, circulated a detailed eight-page memo among the House Republicans entitled "Everything You Ever Wanted to Know About Communicating Medicare." Luntz warned that older voters would never accept changes in Medicare until they were "convinced the system's going broke," and he wrote that costs were "at the crux of our argument"—that "if we can't prove that Medicare is going bankrupt, we'll never be able to sell our solutions." He instructed Republicans how to make their case: "Don't talk about 'improving' Medicare—you are strengthening it." He suggested a visual prop: "Showing them the chart about what happens to Medicare if it goes bankrupt immediately disrupts the complacent atmosphere. The possibility that Medicare premiums will increase by 300% is simply not acceptable to seniors—and they will do anything to prevent this from happening." Then Luntz counselled, "Remind your audience that Republicans want to 'increase spending but at a slower rate.' This language works." At the same time, he advised Republicans to adopt the rhetorical device of accusing Democrats of "using 'scare tactics' by allowing a program to go broke . . . just to score political points."

Americans over the age of sixty-five currently spend an average of twenty-one per cent of their incomes on medical care. The initial Republican proposal for cutting $270 billion in Medicare was to require individuals to pay anywhere from twenty to twenty-five per cent more in increased deductibles, premiums, and co-payments. The relatively wealthy might be able to manage these increases, but the notion of generating large cuts in Medicare by tapping the affluent is a fantasy. Only three per cent of Medicare expenditures are for people over sixty-five with incomes above fifty thousand dollars, while eighty-three per cent are for people over sixty-five with incomes of twenty-five thousand dollars or less. Most of that eighty-three per cent, in fact, goes to those with incomes below fifteen thousand dollars.

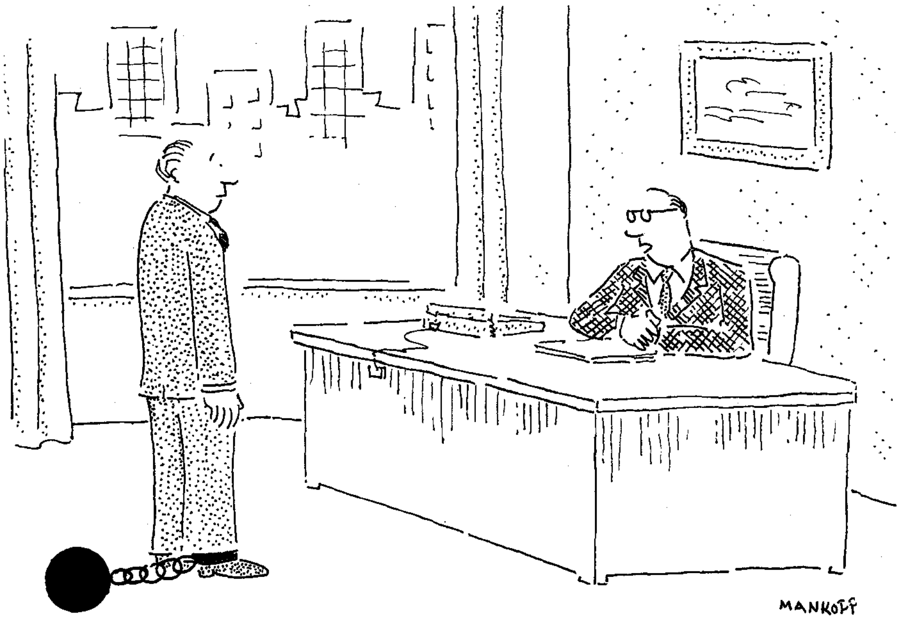
Last week, the Republicans nervously started fiddling with their own formula. On Sunday, House Speaker Newt Gingrich announced that monthly premiums would increase by only seven dollars by 2002, and that health-care providers would have to carry more of the costs. His unsubstantiated figure was widely challenged—or, as his aides claimed, misconstrued. In any case, the Republicans were still eighty billion dollars short of the total they seek, and that would likely come from unspecified future cuts. Then, on Thursday, the day before Republican leaders had promised to announce the specifics of the "Medicare Preservation Act," Gingrich delivered a stem-winding speech at a meeting of the Republican congressional conference in which he claimed not only that Medicare is going financially bankrupt but also that the Democrats are "totally morally bankrupt." His peroration consisted of a fractured version of Henry V's St. Crispin's Day speech: "In the next sixty to ninety days we're going to prove whether or not we're worthy of truly being historic." But by week's end the scheduled release of the details of the G.O.P. proposal had been uneasily postponed until the following week.

The congressional Democrats, now the minority, are enjoying the spectacle of the Republicans' discomfort. Last year, the Democrats were in the pit; this time, they are hecklers in the stands. They have offered no counterproposal of their own. The President, for his part, has proposed a $124-billion reduction in Medicare to be derived mostly from health-care providers, and has also proposed more options and small insurance reforms while avoiding cuts in services for beneficiaries. According to an estimate by the Health Care Financing Administration, the Trust Fund's solvency would thus be extended through the year 2006.

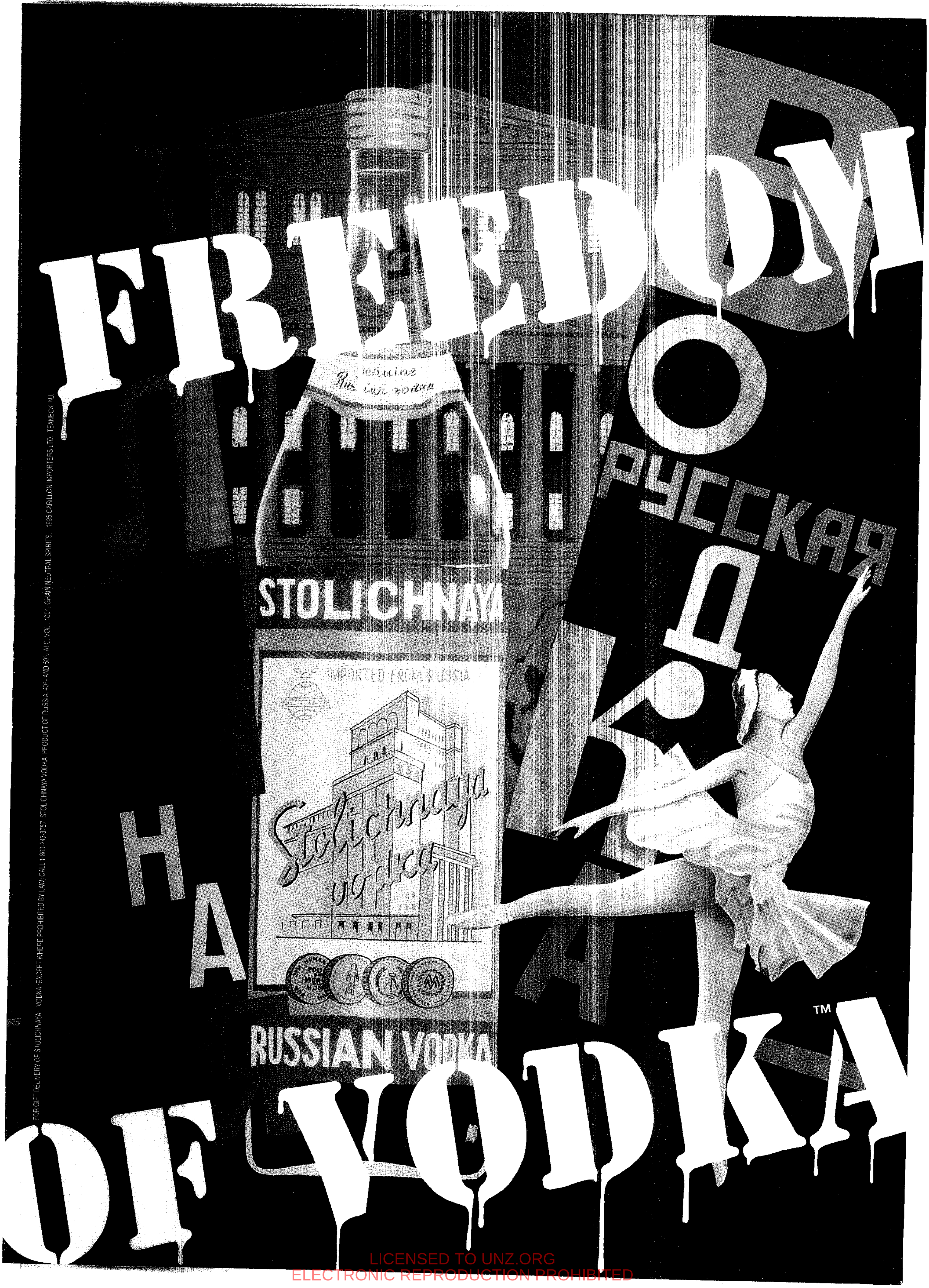
Of course, the only way to reduce Medicare costs without threatening coverage would be to cut the costs of health care over all. But that would demand a retooling of the entire system—something the Republicans rejected in 1994. Clinton's original plan, whatever its shortcomings, would have extended the right to health-care coverage. Republican policy is now "retracting rights," as Paul Starr, a Princeton professor and a member of the original Clinton health-care task force, recently pointed out in the *Times Magazine.*

The Republicans are posing as the protectors of Medicare, but their plan would mean scaling it back drastically; otherwise, their budget numbers implode. Until now, Frank Luntz's communications ploy has worked. But the vapors of bankruptcy can no longer obscure the political dilemma that the Republicans are caught in.

—SIDNEY BLUMENTHAL



"You're doing a good job, Davis, but it's come to my attention that you're a fugitive from a chain gang."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IN THE MAIL

GERMANY'S MEMORIAL

I read Jane Kramer's "Letter from Germany" (August 14th) about Berlin's plans for a Holocaust memorial with a mixture of pain, anger, and amusement. Thanks to the stubborn refusal of my German Lutheran father to divorce my German Jewish mother, she was spared the concentration camps. I, however, was classified as "Mixed Breed, of the 1st degree" and made stateless under German law. So was every German Jew. How dare the Germans claim us as their own, dead or alive! Let those who need reminding visit Auschwitz, Bergen-Belsen, Buchenwald, or any of the other numerous camp sites in their own back yards. Let them see the documentaries, which are not as nice to watch as "Schindler's List." Finally, let us all be careful not to insult the memory of those who died and those few who still survive by turning the Holocaust into a source of entertainment.

Rita Thomählen
Hackensack, N.J.

Growing up in postwar Germany, I received almost no education about the country's past. Now, after being oblivious of the horrors for half a century, Germany is working on its collective conscience. Ms. Kramer writes, "History is a German obsession," so why does she belittle this new trend in Germany to "manage" its past? How does a country manage its horrific past in a morally acceptable way? I can't help feeling that, as the old saying goes, you're damned if you do and damned if you don't!

Ruth E. Boser
Scarsdale, N.Y.

To read about German celebrities, politicians, and artists "struggling" over how to memorialize the Holocaust is almost comical. I can just imagine some Berlin-based conceptualist suggesting that, à la Sisyphus, the memorial competition itself should be the ongoing monument. Jewish Europe was murdered by a Germany that still lives today. This simple fact should not be so terribly difficult for the surviving nation to remember. Germans can debate, create, beat their breasts, forget, and deny all they want. We can pity them for their inherited lot, because they are the winners who can't win. But they can't be taken seriously on this issue.

Daniel Silverman
Sherman Oaks, Calif.

Lea Rosh's boisterous campaign for the construction of a Holocaust memorial in Berlin brings to mind a point made some thirty years ago by the sociologist Ralf Dahrendorf. He argued that if Germany was ever to become a truly liberal democracy—one in which Auschwitz would not remain a possibility—it would have to develop a greater tolerance for social critics, activists, and other gadflies who tend to make life difficult for people in power. Lea Rosh, as she is portrayed by Jane Kramer, is pushy, brassy, and shamelessly self-promoting, and has terrible taste in everything from bifocals to monumental architecture. But what the heck—her heart's in the right place, I guess. And what really matters is that someone as generally annoying as Rosh is able not only to survive but actually to flourish in a country where for generations the first duty of every citizen was to shut up. In my view, fundamental changes like this will do more than all their monuments, memorials, and didactic street signs put together to make sure the Germans never build another Auschwitz.

Herb Meritt
New Providence, N.J.

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WASHINGTON'S JOURNALISTS

In her piece on the Elsa Walsh–Charlie Peters contretemps (The Talk of the Town, August 14th), Jane Mayer makes two main points, both of which seem to me to be wrong: that it was hypocritical for Charlie, as a journalist, to warn the governor of West Virginia of the consequences if his wife was quoted saying she hated the place, and that Charlie's concern was not sincere, but merely a cover for the view that "political wives . . . are to be seen and not heard." On the first point, Charlie has never held himself up as the kind of journalist who maintains adversarial relations with all politicians all the time (as opposed to when they're doing something wrong), so which of his journalistic principles was he violating, exactly? On the second, Mayer, who unironically refers to the "desolation" of West Virginia as if it were the Siberian steppes, obviously just doesn't get how sensitive people in the provinces are to being thought of as rubes by their representatives and their families.

NICHOLAS LEMANN
Pelham, N.Y.

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HOLLYWOOD'S WRITER

Michael Korda should know better. In "Wasn't She Great?" (August 14th) he says Bernard Geis Associates was "technically" the publisher of "Valley of the Dolls," by Jacqueline Susann. The fact is that B.G.A. was the publisher in every sense of the word. We had a publishing contract with Susann, we paid her an advance, we did a creative job of editing on her rough and rambling manuscript, we bought the paper on which the book was printed, we printed the book, and we advertised and promoted it and did everything else a publisher is supposed to do. True, our books were distributed by Random House, but does that mean that Warner Books, whose books are distributed by Little, Brown, is only "technically" the publisher of "The Bridges of Madison County"?

BERNARD GEIS
New York City

Where is Michael Korda looking for signs of Jackie Susann, anyhow? They're in every campy bookstore and gift shop in Greenwich Village. Even a famous movie magazine's gossip columnist goes by the moniker Ted Casablanca. Go ask Elvis: immortality is in the marketing.

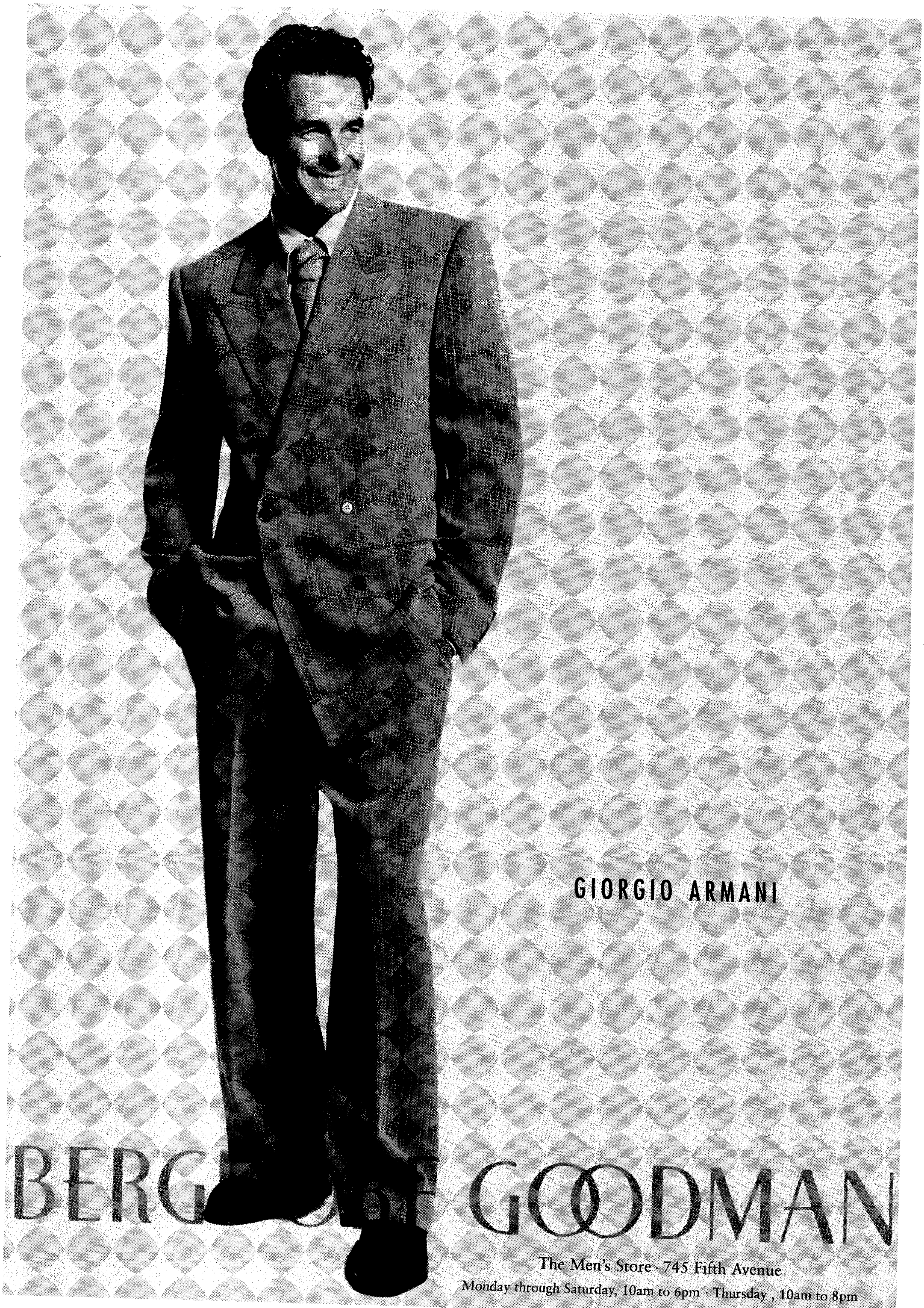
JENNIFER LUCAS
Forest Hills, N.Y.

AMERICA'S POL POT?

Daniel J. Kevles (Comment, August 14th) forgot to mention the Unabomber's most recent, and perhaps most relevant, antecedent: the Khmer Rouge. Was I the only one who, on reading excerpts from the Unabomber's tract, found myself sympathizing with his analysis but repelled by his aim of freeing us from technological contamination through a forced march to the Year Zero?

E. J. GRAFF
Watertown, Mass.

Letters should be as brief as possible, and sent with the writer's name, address, and daytime phone number to "In the Mail," The New Yorker, 20 West 43rd Street, New York, N.Y. 10036. They may be edited for length and clarity.



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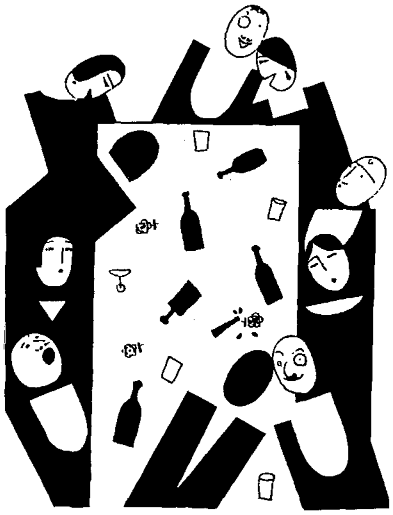

GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN

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			20	21	22	23
24	25	26				

THE THEATRE

OPENINGS AND PREVIEWS

(Please call the phone number listed with the theatre for timetables and ticket information.)

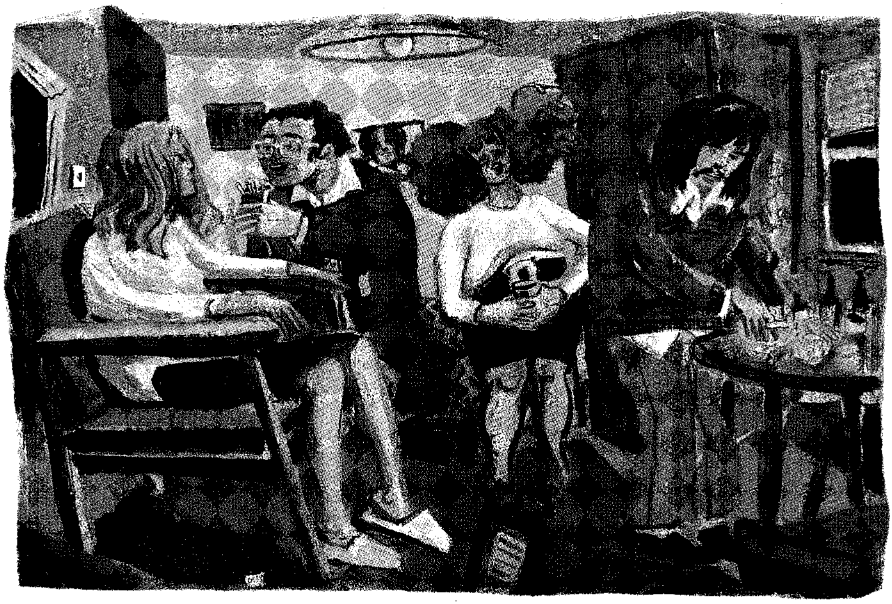
Company—The Roundabout Theatre Company opens its thirtieth-anniversary season with a revival of Stephen Sondheim and George Furth's 1970 musical about marriage. The cast includes Boyd Gaines, Debra Monk, Charlotte d'Amboise, and Kate Burton. Directed by Scott Ellis and choreographed by Rob Marshall. In previews. (Broadway at 45th St. 869-8400.)

Dark Is the Night—Aleksandar Popovic's absurdist drama, set in Belgrade in 1991, deals with a family's attempt to maintain a sense of normalcy as their world deteriorates amid antiwar demonstrations. Opens Sept. 21 at 8 and continues, Thursdays through Sundays, through Oct. 1. (La Mama, 74A E. 4th St. 475-7710.)

Endgame—Samuel Beckett's 1957 play, in a Classic Stage Company production. With Kathleen Chalfant, John Seitz, Irma St. Paule, and Alan Manson. Directed by David Esbjornson. Previews begin Sept. 26. (136 E. 13th St. 677-4210.)

Full Gallop—Manhattan Theatre Club's season opener examines the late career of the fashion editor Diana Vreeland. Mary Louise Wilson, who stars, co-wrote the script with Mark Hampton. Directed by Nicholas Martin. Previews begin Sept. 26. (Manhattan Theatre Club, at City Center, 131 W. 55th St. 581-1212.)

Garden District—Circle in the Square inaugurates its forty-fifth-anniversary season with two one-acts by Tennessee Williams ("Something Unspoken," starring Myra Carter and Pamela Payton-Wright, and directed by Theodore Mann, and "Suddenly Last Summer," starring Elizabeth Ashley and directed by Harold Scott), presented under the title of the original 1958 double bill. Previews begin Sept. 22. (50th St. west of Broadway. 239-6200.)



Caroline Seymour, Neal Jones, Toby Poser, and Patrick Fitzgerald, in "Ecstasy."

An Italian Straw Hat—The National Theatre of the Deaf, performing in a blend of signed and spoken language, puts its spin on Eugène Labiche's 1851 farce. Sept. 21 at 7:30, Sept. 22 at 8, Sept. 23 at 2:30 and 8, and Sept. 24 at 3. (Kaye Playhouse, Hunter College, Park Ave. at 68th St. 772-4448.)

Mathew in the School of Life—The actors in composer John Moran and director Bob McGrath's collaboration perform to a prerecorded assemblage of synthesized music, found sounds, and dialogue, against a background of film and slide projections. Mr. Moran is one of three who portray the title character, a robot-angel from a science-fiction heaven. A Ridge Theatre production. Previews begin Sept. 22. (The Kitchen, 512 W. 19th St. 255-5793.)

Moon Over Buffalo—Carol Burnett and Philip Bosco star in Ken Ludwig's new comedy as husband-and-wife actors playing Buffalo with a touring company. With Randy Graff, Jane Connell, James Valentine, Dennis Ryan, Andy Taylor, and Kate Miller. Tom Moore is the director; Bob Mackie designed the costumes. In previews. (Martin Beck, 302 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)

Reinventing Daddy—A dysfunctional-family comedy by Gary Bonasorte, presented by Rattlestick Productions. Opens Sept. 25 at 8 and runs through Oct. 15. (Theatre Off Park, 224 Waverly Pl., at 11th St. 353-3665.)

Same Old Moon—The Irish Repertory Theatre opens the season in its new home with Geraldine Aron's comic memory play, about a fortyish playwright whose marriage has broken up. Preview on Sept. 20. Opens Sept. 21 at 7 and runs through Oct. 15. (132 W. 22nd St. 279-4200.)

Signature Theatre Company—A double bill of dramas by this season's playwright in residence, Adrienne Kennedy: "Funnyhouse of a Negro" and "A Movie Star Has to Star in Black and White." Opens Sept. 22 at 8 and runs through Oct. 22. (Public, 425 Lafayette St. 260-2400.)

Sin—Kelly Coffield plays an aerial traffic reporter in this comedy by Wendy MacLeod. Directed by David Petrarca. In previews. (Second Stage, Broadway at 76th St. 873-6103.)

Third New Immigrant Play Festival—"Odysseus' Homecoming," by Colombian playwright Ben-Hur Carmona, is the final offering in the annual showcase of new works. Previews Sept. 21-23. Opens Sept. 24 at 8 and continues through Oct. 8. (26th Street Theatre, 309 E. 26th St. 683-9772.)

What Ever—Heather Woodbury brings her eight-part solo serial, in which she plays ten major characters and more than ninety others, back to P.S. 122. Directed by Dudley Saunders. Opens Sept. 26 at 7:30. (150 First Ave., at 9th St. 477-5288.)

OPENED RECENTLY

After-Play—Anne Meara's comedy, about two couples who get together for an after-theatre dinner, stars Ms. Meara, Barbara Barrie, Larry Keith, and Merwin Goldsmith. (Reviewed in our issue of 2/13/95.) (Theatre Four, 424 W. 55th St. 239-6200.)

Blink of an Eye—Jeremy Dobrish's comic mystery continues through Sept. 30. (Ohio Theatre, 66 Wooster St. 560-7387.)

Death Defying Acts—Three subpar one-act comedies, by David Mamet, Elaine May, and Woody Allen, that have the words "Written to Order" stamped all over them. (3/20/95) (Variety Arts, Third Ave. at 14th St. 239-6200.)

A Doll's House—Ibsen's classic, in a Pearl Theatre Company production directed by Grey Johnson. (80 St. Marks Pl. 598-9802.)

A Dream Play—The Independent Theatre Company opens its eighth season with August Strindberg's despairing meditation on the difficulties of life, movingly directed by Paul Todaro. Although the play is sometimes more lecture than drama, the cast is strong; Rajesh Bose, in particular, is good at bringing out the script's dark humor. Still, Strindberg's constant refrain of "Alas for mankind!" does seem, by the end, like the only appropriate response to the characters' pitiful problems. (House of Candles Theatre, 99 Stanton St. 353-3088. Closes Oct. 7.)

Ecstasy—Mike Leigh's play takes place in a dismal North London flat in the winter of 1979. The late-seventies costumes and set are depressingly perfect, and the actors bring the six working-class characters to life with great specificity and vitality. (Judith Anderson, 422 W. 42nd St. 279-4200. Closes Oct. 7.)

The Emperor Jones—Kate Valk, Paul Lazar, and Dave Shelley are in the cast of the Wooster Group's production of O'Neill's 1920 drama. (Performing Garage, 33 Wooster St. 966-3651. Closes Oct. 1.)

Floating Rhoda and the Glue Man—Dylan McDermott and Myriam Cyr have the lead roles in Eve Ensler's new comedy, about the sexual adventures of young couples. Directed by Ariel Orr Jordan. (HERE, 145 Sixth Ave., near Spring St. 647-0202. Closes Sept. 30.)

The Food Chain—In Nicky Silver's new play, the paths of five New Yorkers cross, hilariously. The situations are familiar and sitcomish, but the writing is tangy and memorably funny, and the actors—especially Hope Davis, as a dithery poet, and Phyllis Newman, as a long-suffering Jewish matron whose idea of listening is to talk—give smart, wonderfully fresh performances. Robert Falls, the artistic director of Chicago's Goodman Theatre, directed. (9/11/95) (Westside, 407 W. 43rd St. 307-4100.)

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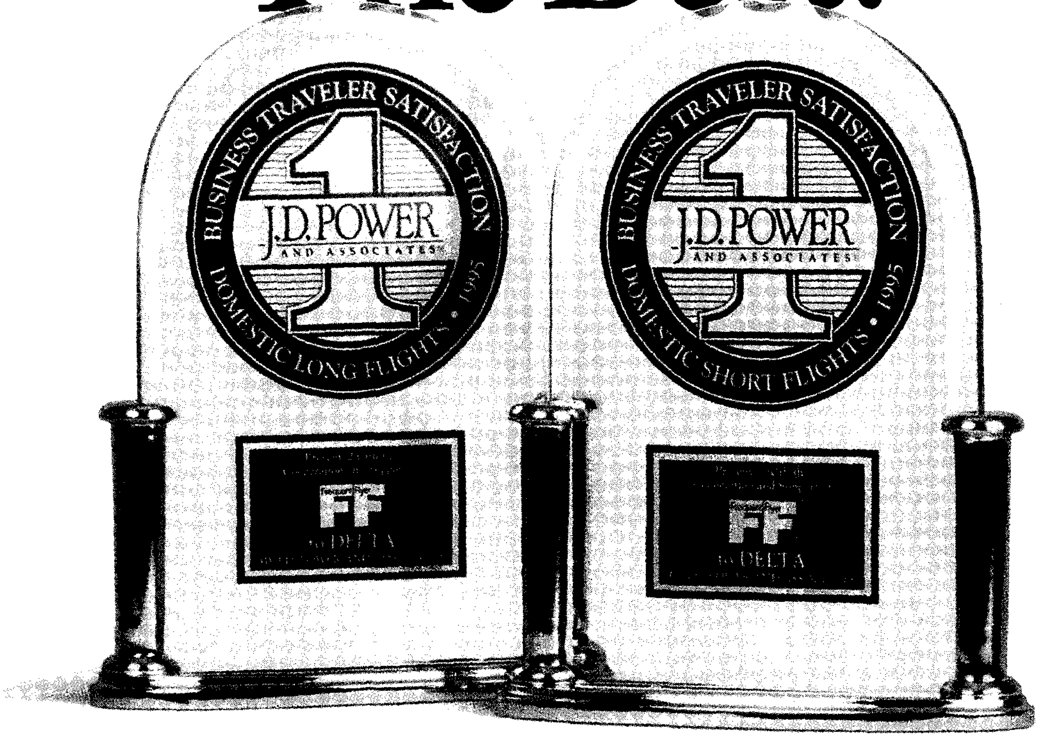
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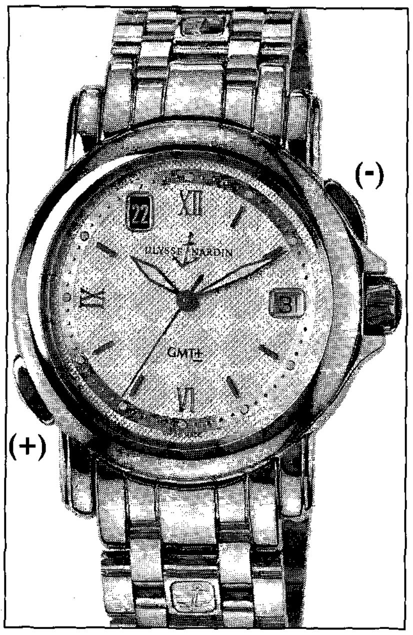

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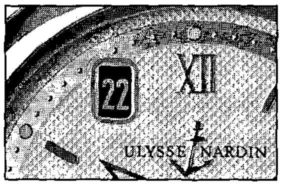

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For Colored Girls Who Have Considered Suicide / When the Rainbow Is Enuf—Ntozake Shange directed this twentieth-anniversary production of her consciousness-raising play about black womanhood in America. It's still so fresh that after two decades it seems like it was written yesterday. (Tribeca Performing Arts Center, 199 Chambers St. 346-8510. Closes Sept. 24.)

A Greater Good—Keith Huff's comedy follows the adventures of a suburban housewife out to change the world. Directed by Mark Hunter. (Miranda, 259 W. 30th St. 268-9829. Closes Sept. 30.)

Having Our Say—Sadie and Bessie Delany, two sisters who have passed the hundred-year mark, presented their vivid life stories in a 1993 best-seller; the book has been adapted beautifully from the page to the stage by Emily Mann, who also directed. Gloria Foster and Mary Alice are brilliant as the sisters, who were taught by their family to "reach high" despite the dogging of Jim Crow. (4/24/95) (Booth, 222 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)

The Heiress—A revival of Ruth and Augustus Goetz's 1947 adaptation of Henry James's "Washington Square," directed by Gerald Gutierrez. Cherry Jones, who plays the title character, is exquisitely—almost unbearably—vulnerable. And the wonderful Frances Sternhagen is touching and funny as a widowed aunt. (3/20/95) (Cort, 138 W. 48th St. 239-6200.)

House of Bugs: A Biological Tragedy—An unsuccessful sendup of that old theme the crisis of meaning, in which an autocratic director (Steven Rattazzi) forces an existentially anguished script on a couple of hapless actors, who have to rehearse sex scenes on a stage equipped with video screens that mock their behavior. The writer-director-designer, Kevin Cunningham, demonstrates his notion that the world is reasonless by having one of the actors sit on a toilet, shoot heroin, and read French critical theory aloud. (St. Mark's In-the-Bouwerie, Second Ave. at 10th St. 533-4650. Closes Sept. 24.)

How to Succeed in Business Without Really Trying—In this revival of Frank Loesser's 1961 musical, Matthew Broderick has polish and timing, but it's Lillias White's gospel solo in "Brotherhood of Man" that lifts the audience into a zone of joy. (4/24/95) (Richard Rodgers, 226 W. 46th St. 307-4100.)

Incognito Sex—Linda Hill examines the tangled path of her sex life in a new solo work. Sept. 25 at 7:30. (Dixon Place, 258 Bowery, near Houston St. 219-3088.)

Indiscretions—This production of Jean Cocteau's "Les Parents Terribles," a dark comedy about the perversities of desire in family life, is marred by heavy-handedness and an unsatisfying central performance: Kathleen Turner, playing a hysterically possessive mother, is an unfocussed sprawl with a distractingly unplaceable accent. Roger Rees, Cynthia Nixon, and Jude Law also star, under the direction of Sean Mathias. (5/15/95) (Ethel Barrymore, 243 W. 47th St. 239-6200.)

The Island of Lost Shoes—The gay British troupe known as Bloolips—Bette Bourne, Lavinia Co-op, Naughty Knickers, Bella, and Harmony—brings its new show to town. (P.S. 122, 150 First Ave., at 9th St. 477-5288. Closes Sept. 24.)

John & Jen—Andrew Lippa and Tom Greenwald's musical, which explores problems of love and family, is often hackneyed and repetitive, though it's well staged by Gabriel Barre. (Lamb's, 130 W. 44th St. 997-1780.)

Language of One—A deaf, gay, Jewish architect sets out to "find his people and his place" by leaving his deaf Jewish family and settling in the gay community, which fails to provide the insight he is searching for. Eventually he meets the man of his dreams, only to discover that happiness doesn't come from other people. The show, co-written by its director, Drew Emery, and star, Lewis Merkin, is smart, thought-provoking, and—through the use of a technique called shadowing (in which characters are assigned two actors, one signing, one speaking)—accessible to both deaf and hearing viewers. Margaret Arnold (who signs) is terrific as a fretful, protective mother. A production of the New York Deaf Theatre. (Vineyard, 108 E. 15th St. 683-9772, voice/use relay. Closes Sept. 24.)

Math and Aftermath—Jim Grimsley's play is set in 1953 on the Marshall Islands' Bikini atoll, the day before one of the United States' infamous atomic-bomb tests, during the filming of a gay porn movie. (Camilla's, 44 Walker St. 925-9456. Closes Sept. 30.)

A Midsummer Night's Dream—Gorilla Repertory Theatre's annual free outdoor production in Washington Square Park, directed by Christopher Carter Sanderson, runs through Sept. 24. (For more information, call 330-8086.)

Mister Lincoln—A one-man show, written by Herbert Mitgang and starring William Walsh, that tells the complete story of the sixteenth president—from his impoverished youth to that fateful day at Ford's Theatre—in excruciating detail. Though some of the anecdotes are entertaining and informative, Walsh's delivery doesn't do justice to Lincoln's famed oratorical skills. For Civil War buffs. (Irish Arts Center, 553 W. 51st St. 581-4125. Closes Oct. 1.)

Party—In David Dillon's comedy, seven gay men get together to play a strip version of truth or dare, with terrifically funny (if occasionally didactic) results. (Douglas Fairbanks, 432 W. 42nd St. 239-4321.)

Pets!—Helen Butleroff, together with seventeen writers, composers, and lyricists and five engaging actors, has created the perfect theatrical beach novel, about people and their pets. The evening has its slow bits, but its charm and silliness consistently win out. How can you lose with a show in which a lovelorn iguana sings a tango? (Theatre East, 211 E. 60th St. 307-4100.)

Rob Becker's Defending the Caveman—A hundred-minute standup routine about the discontent between the sexes. A lot of vigorous nodding goes on in the theatre—never by men and women at the same time. (Helen Hayes, 240 W. 44th St. 307-4100.)

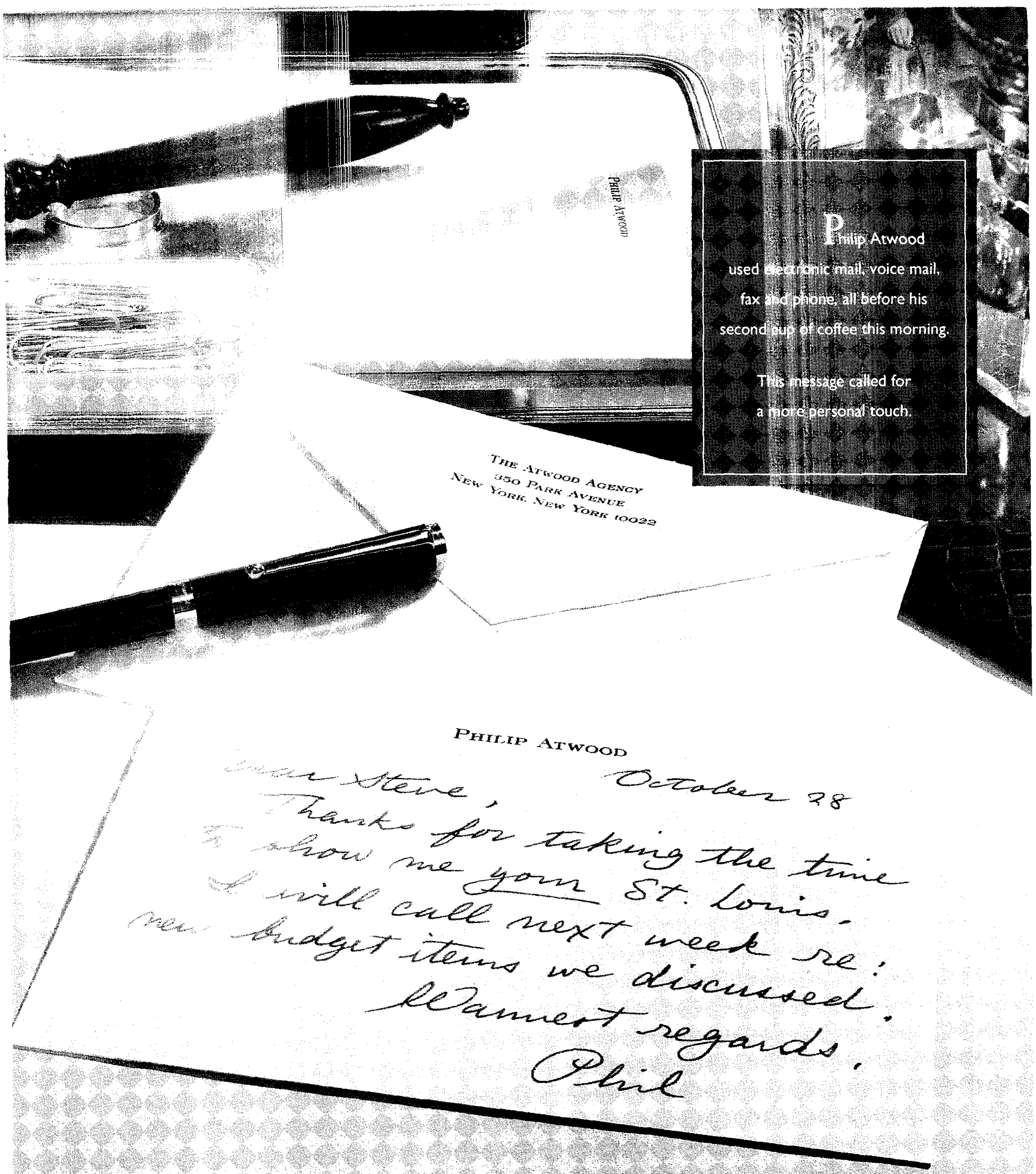
The Secret Annex—A musical about Anne Frank, which turns out not to be as odd an idea as it sounds. Robert K. Carr's book doesn't make the plot newly interesting or the characters much more than stereotypes, but the songs, by Mr. Carr and William Charles Baton, are affecting, especially during Act I, when the family decides to go into hiding. (The second act, unfortunately, consists mainly of complaints about being stuck in the attic.) Dom Ruggiero's staging begins with a superb montage that transforms the cast from carefree strollers in a park into cowed subjects of the Nazis. As Otto Frank, Anne's father (and the family's only survivor) Don Frame is a powerful force; the story is told from his point of view, and it is difficult, at the end, to see his careful plans vanquished by a pounding on the door. (Playhouse 91, at 316 E. 91st St. 831-2000. Closes Sept. 24.)

Smokey Joe's Café—The Songs of Leiber and Stoller—A feast of early rock and roll, performed by a cast with Grade A lungs and legs. (Virginia, 245 W. 52nd St. 239-6200.)

Standing By—A romantic comedy by Norman Barasch, starring Gregg Edelman and Cynthia Watros as a couple who meet on a plane. Presented by the York Theatre Company. (Theatre at St. Peter's Church, Lexington Ave. at 54th St. 935-5820.)

Swingtime Canteen—A re-creation of a 1944 U.S.O. concert, performed in a night club. Extraneous bits of plot threaten to derail the show, but the lovely songs, done with verve and charm, carry the day. Charles Busch, donning drag again, and Maxene Andrews have joined the cast. (Blue Angel, 321 W. 44th St. 239-6200.)

Sylvia—In A. R. Gurney's new comedy, Sarah Jessica Parker, as a dog named Sylvia, brings meaning to the life of a middle-aged currency trader (John Cunningham) while driving a canine-shaped wedge between him and his wife (Mariette Hartley). Parker has some funny moments, but this upper-middle-class fairy tale settles too soon into a monotonous sweetness; it lacks bite. John Tillinger directed. This run closes Sept. 23,



Philip Atwood used electronic mail, voice mail, fax and phone, all before his second cup of coffee this morning.

This message called for a more personal touch.

Philip Atwood

Dear Steve, October 28
Thanks for taking the time
to show me your St. Louis.
I will call next week re:
new budget items we discussed.
Warmest regards,
Phil

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but previews begin at the John Houseman on Sept. 29, with Jan Hooks replacing Ms. Parker and Mary Beth Piel replacing Ms. Hartley. (Manhattan Theatre Club, at City Center, 131 W. 55th St. 581-1212.)

Tons of Money—Alan Ayckbourn's adaptation of Will Evans and Valentine's 1922 farce on the theme of greed. (Synchronicity Space, 55 Mercer St. 713-5334. Closes Sept. 24.)

Too Jewish?—Avi Hoffman sets about reviving Yiddish in this mixture of songs and stories. (Westside, 407 W. 43rd St. 307-4100.)

Too Much Light Makes the Baby Go Blind—The Neo-Futurists, a troupe from Chicago, perform thirty original two-minute plays both comic and dramatic—touching on politics, current events, sexuality, and morality—in one hour. It's a little like summer-camp talent night, only with talent. (HERE, 145 Sixth Ave., near Spring St. 330-8087. Thursdays through Saturdays at 11 P.M.)

Travels with My Aunt—Giles Havergal, directing his own witty adaptation of Graham Greene's novel, has captured the book's amusingly puzzled tone with his playful, inventive (though overlong) staging. Four wildly different actors all play Henry Pulling, the staid retired banker whose eccentric Aunt Augusta drags him into her international adventures; one doubles as Aunt Augusta, and the other three skillfully handle some twenty additional parts. (Minetta Lane Theatre, 18 Minetta Lane. 420-8000. Closes Oct. 1.)

Waiting for Godot—A solidly played production of Samuel Beckett's modernist classic. Craig Smith and Harris Berlinsky are the two tramps, Estragon and Vladimir; Abner Genece is the overbearing slave driver, Pozzo; and Kennedy Brown is endearingly pathetic as Lucky, the servant who thinks on cue. Eve Adamson directed. (Bouwerie Lane Theatre, 330 Bowery, at Bond St. 677-0060.)

The Wallenberg Mission—A Love Creek production of Nicholas Wenckheim's play, about the Swedish diplomat and businessman Raoul Wallenberg, who rescued thousands of Hungarian Jews during the Second World War. (Harold Clurman, 412 W. 42nd St. 769-7973. Closes Sept. 24.)

What You Said—The improv company Chicago City Limits presents a brand-new revue, featuring its ever-popular five-minute musical. (Chicago City Limits Theatre, First Ave. at 61st St. 888-5233.)

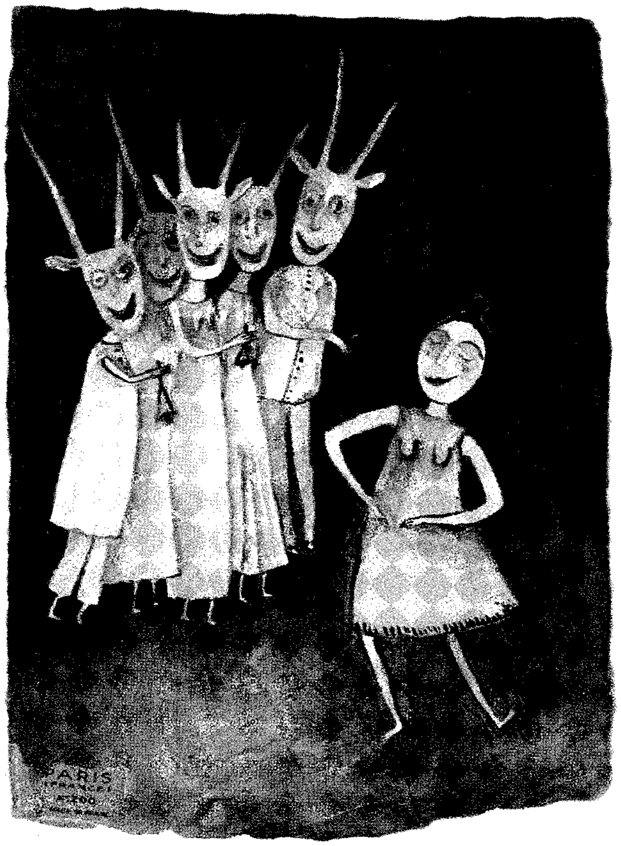
Working Class—Richard Hoehler's play, recently seen at the Edinburgh Festival, takes a look at American laborers. (Mint, 311 W. 43rd St. 315-9434. Closes Oct. 8.)

LONG RUNS

BEAUTY AND THE BEAST: Palace, Broadway at 47th St. 307-4100. . . . **BLUE MAN GROUP / TUBES:** Astor Place Theatre, 434 Lafayette St. 254-4370. . . . **CATS:** Winter Garden, Broadway at 50th St. 239-6200. . . . **CRAZY FOR YOU:** Shubert, 225 W. 44th St. 239-6200. . . . **THE FANTASTICKS:** Sullivan Street Playhouse, 181 Sullivan St., at Bleecker St. 674-3838. . . . **GRANDMA SYLVIA'S FUNERAL:** SoHo Playhouse, 15 Vandam St. 691-1555. . . . **GREASE!:** Eugene O'Neill, 230 W. 49th St. 239-6200. . . . **LES MISÉRABLES:** Imperial, 249 W. 45th St. 239-6200. . . . **MISS SAIGON:** Broadway Theatre, Broadway at 53rd St. 239-6200. . . . **PERFECT CRIME:** Duffy, 1553 Broadway, at 46th St. 695-3401. . . . **THE PHANTOM OF THE OPERA:** Majestic, 245 W. 44th St. 239-6200. . . . **SHOW BOAT:** Gershwin, 51st St. west of Broadway. 307-4100. . . . **STOMP:** Orpheum, 126 Second Ave., at St. Marks Pl. 477-2477. . . . **SUNSET BOULEVARD:** Minskoff, 45th St. west of Broadway. 307-4007. . . . **TONY N' TINA'S WEDDING:** St. John's Church, 81 Christopher St. 279-4200.

DANCE

Compagnie Maguy Marin—Sept. 20-22 at 8, Sept. 23 at 2 and 8, and Sept. 24 at 2 and 7:30: Final performances of "Waterzooi," choreographed by the French dance aphorist Marin (and named after a Belgian goulash). Sept. 26 at 8: "May B," an absurdist ode to Samuel Beckett in which the powdered troupe scampers about in white nightclothes. (Joyce Theatre, 175 Eighth Ave., at 19th St. 242-0800. Through Sept. 30.)



Compagnie Maguy Marin, at the Joyce Theatre.

"Hot Pink"—Members of the Colloquium Contemporary Dance Exchange, an ad-hoc company that includes Ann Carlson, David Dorfman, Doug Elkins, Bebe Miller, and Doug Varone, pool their talents in a benefit for breast-cancer research. (Dance Theatre Workshop, 219 W. 19th St. 924-0077. Sept. 21-22 at 8.)

Noche Flamenca—A return engagement for the seven singers, dancers, and musicians from Madrid. At the end of individual sung phrases, guitar passes, and thunderous dance improvisations, the performers onstage shout their encouragement (*"Dále, Antonio. ¡Eso es!"*). When the audience joins in, the theatre can take on the feel of a Gypsy encampment. (Symphony Space, Broadway at 95th St. 864-5400. Sept. 22-23 at 8.)

"Travelogue—Twenty to Eight"—Berliner Sasha Waltz has choreographed an evening-length work, which begins with five dancers assembling for a dinner party. The ensuing kitchen misadventures include a tiff between a refrigerator and a sewing machine. (La Mama, 74A E. 4th St. 475-7710. Sept. 23-24 at 7:30.)

Human Arts Ensemble—Choreographer Kalya Yannatos appears in three works on spiritual themes (a duet, "Simultaneous Contrasts"; a solo, "Moksha"; and the quartet "Ma-Om") and in "Shiva-Shakti," a duet by Tamar Rogoff, in which the continuous contact of the dancers recalls the erotic embrace of the Hindu gods. (St. Mark's In-the-Bouwerie, Second Ave. at 10th St. 674-8194. Sept. 21-23 at 8:30 and Sept. 24 at 7:30.)

NIGHT LIFE

CONCERTS

New Africa String Band—Big Jack Johnson, Lonnie Pitchford, and others in a musical tribute to nineteen-thirties Mississippi. (World Financial Center, Battery Park City. No tickets necessary. Sept. 20 at 7.)

David (Fathead) Newman Quintet—Playing the music of Duke Ellington and Billy Strayhorn. (St. Peter's Church, Lexington Ave. at 54th St. 935-2200. No tickets necessary. Sept. 21 at 7:30.)

Toshiko Akiyoshi and Lew Tabackin—The jazz pianist and the saxophonist/flutist. (The New School, 66 W. 12th St. 229-5690. Sept. 22 at 6.)

Meregazo '95—A night of steamy merengue. (Paramount, Madison Square Garden. 465-6000. Sept. 23 at 8.)

Juan Gabriel—The Mexican pop star. (Radio City Music Hall, Sixth Ave. at 50th St. 247-4777. Sept. 23-24 at 8.)

John Prine / Junior Brown—In 1971, when Prine first emerged on the folk scene with frank, disturbing songs like "Hello in There" and "Sam Stone," Kris Kristofferson commented, "No way somebody this young could be writing so heavy." Now, as he approaches fifty, this veteran sounds younger than ever. His 1991 comeback, "The Missing Years," which he produced and distributed himself, won a Grammy and went gold—not bad for a do-it-yourself shot in the dark. His new one, "Lost Dogs and Mixed Blessings," continues in its predecessor's winning path. / An Indiana cowboy with a flair for songs about heartbreak, hillbillies, and fools, Brown is something of a country-and-Western throwback, a basso-profundo crooner with a salty, poker-faced delivery. He has a sense of humor, too: his guitar-propelled material is populated with state troopers and hula girls. But his fearsome-looking "guit steel"—a cross between a Fender Bullet and an old lap steel guitar—is what has made his reputation. He's probably the only guitarist who can switch from rapid-fire chicken pickin' to delicate slide work in the course of a single bar. (Beacon Theatre, Broadway at 74th St. 496-7070. Sept. 23 at 8.)

Blur—The most celebrated English band since the Smiths, Blur continues to tighten its grip: the foursome's new single (yet to be released here), "Country House," recently débuted at No. 1, capping a rise that began last year, when "Parklife," a gleefully satiric collection that captured just about every mood in the history of British rock, made the chameleonlike songwriter Damon Albarn the object of the kind of praise once reserved for Pete Townshend and Ray Davies. (Academy, 234 W. 43rd St. 307-7171. Sept. 26 at 8.)

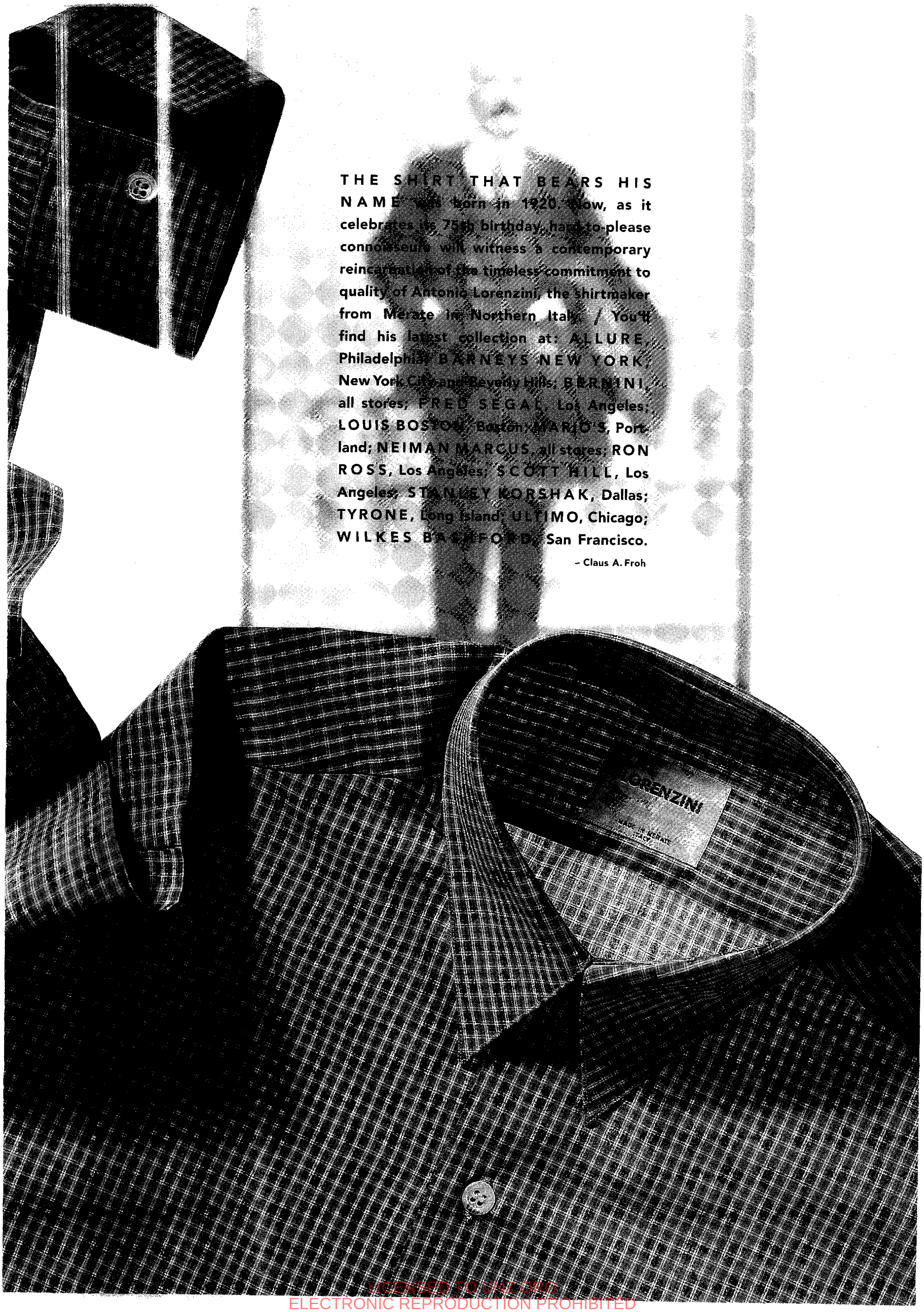
JAZZ AND STANDARDS

(A highly arbitrary listing, in which boldface type indicates some of the more notable performers in town. Musicians and night-club proprietors live complicated lives; it is advisable to call ahead to confirm engagements.)

Algonquin Hotel, 59 W. 44th St. (840-6800)—Tangy-voiced singer **WESLIA WHITFIELD** (in through mid-October) interprets the American popular canon with an understated, intelligent spin. Her early set features songs by Harry Warren and Victor Young, and in her late one she'll do selections from her aptly titled new CD, "Nice Work." Dining.

Blue Note, 131 W. 3rd St., near Sixth Ave. (475-8592)—Through Sept. 24: the **RAY BROWN** trio. With a Sequoia-sized sound and the rhythmic gait of a high-stepping thoroughbred, Brown is our premier bassist and a national treasure. He's joined by the smooth L.A. singer Ernie Andrews. Dining.

GISELLE POTTER



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– Claus A. Froh

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Café Pierre, 2 E. 61st St. (940-8185)—Thursdays through Saturdays, vocalist-pianist **KATHLEEN LANDIS** performs the music of Harold Arlen and Johnny Mercer. Dining.

Cajun, 129 Eighth Ave., at 16th St. (691-6174)—A New Orleans-style restaurant specializing in Dixieland and swing. On Fridays, catch the Canal Street Dixieland Jazz and Blues band. Saturdays belong to the New Atlantic Jazz band.

Carlyle Hotel, Madison Ave. at 76th St. (744-1600)—Vocalist **BARBARA COOK** continues through mid-October. . . . ¶ Pianist **PETER MINTUN** is in charge at the Bemelmans Bar. A genuine throwback to a gentler time, this elegant performer specializes in curios from the twenties and thirties. Agreeable and reassuring without being over-gracious, he's sort of a curio himself.

Fifty Seven Fifty Seven, 57 E. 57th St. (758-5757)—A cool, sumptuous piano-and-bass room in the Four Seasons Hotel, with twenty-two-foot-high ceilings, a long backlit bar stocked with single-malt Scotch, and fine jazz seven nights a week. Wednesdays through Saturdays, Donald Johnston is the featured pianist. Dining.

Five Spot, 4 W. 31st St. (631-0100)—Set in a mammoth turn-of-the-century ballroom, this jazz club is all marble and gilt, with a few modern touches, such as the zebra-patterned carpet in the V.I.P. room upstairs. Dining.

Iridium, 44 W. 63rd St. (582-2121)—Across the street from Lincoln Center, this restaurant and club features a handsome bar upstairs and a surreal performance space downstairs. Through Sept. 24: **JERRY GONZALEZ AND THE FORT APACHE BAND.**

Knitting Factory, 74 Leonard St., between Broadway and Church St. (219-3055)—Sept. 21-23: **JOHN LURIE AND THE LOUNGE LIZARDS.** You've got to hand it to Lurie. For almost twenty years he's been daring listeners to decide: poseur or visionary? Either way, it's hard not to like the Lizards' wacky G-man shtick. Sept. 25: The **DAVID MURRAY** big band.

Le Madeleine, 403 W. 43rd St. (246-2993)—Every Sunday evening, guitar great **GENE BERTONCINI** lights up this cozy Hell's Kitchen bistro with his simmering melodicism and chordal grace.

Michael's Pub, 211 E. 55th St. (758-2272)—**MEL TORMÉ** begins a two-week engagement on Sept. 26. On Mondays, Woody Allen continues his night job as clarinet player in the **NEW ORLEANS FUNERAL AND RAGTIME ORCHESTRA,** a Dixieland-jazz ensemble. Closed Sundays.

Rainbow & Stars, 30 Rockefeller Plaza (632-5000)—A plush, old-fashioned night club, sixty-five floors above it all, complete with Art Deco fixtures, intimate glitter, and a panoramic view as dizzying as the tab. **KAREN AKERS** is the main attraction through mid-October. With her svelte silhouette, haute couture, and piquant coif, Akers is every inch (some seventy-two) the chanteuse. . . . ¶ Across the hall, in the Rainbow Room, there's a revolving dance floor, plus swinging big-band music courtesy of the Rainbow Room Orchestra, featuring vocalists Sean Mahony and Claudette Sierra. Closed Mondays.

Smalls, 183 W. 10th St. (929-7565)—This aptly named club features up-and-coming players jamming late into the night.

Sweet Basil, 88 Seventh Ave. S., at Bleecker St. (242-1785)—Through Sept. 24: **ABDULLAH IBRAHIM.** It's always a treat to hear this pianist: his free-ranging improvisations, Ellingtonian lyricism, and funky Johannesburg vamps capture the common ground between South Africa and the Big Apple. Starting Sept. 26: **CHICO AND VON FREEMAN.** When this Chicago tenor sax legend and his tenor-playing offspring get together, it's not uncommon for Dad to come off as an avant eccentric and his son as a well-mannered conservative. Age and temperament notwithstanding, a more propitious match of creativity and swing can't be found. Dining.

Tavern on the Green, Central Park W. at 67th St. (873-3200)—Through Sept. 24: the **CONCORD JAZZ ALL-STAR JAM.** Concord Jazz, the little California record label that could, is one of the bastions of unpretentious, thoroughly swinging mainstream players. Any combination of musicians from its stable is sure to rock the house.

Village Vanguard, 178 Seventh Ave. S., at 11th St. (255-4037)—The world's most famous jazz club is also the last place in town that still looks, smells, and feels like a classic jazz club—subterranean, smoky, and thick with the spirits of past masters. Through Sept. 24: the **BENNY BAILEY** quartet. An expatriate since the sixties, Bailey possesses a burnished trumpet tone and the wisdom of an old-school New York hard-bopper. Welcome home. He's joined by saxophonist Jimmy Heath, who should be able to match Bailey's élan and skill. On Sept. 26, the **JIM HALL** trio takes over. The **VANGUARD JAZZ ORCHESTRA** holds sway on Mondays.

Visiones, 125 Macdougal St., at W. 3rd St. (673-5576)—A tiny, low-key supper club where the jazz, like the Spanish-American cuisine, can take on a spicy, multicultural flavor. Sept. 20-23: The **ARTHUR BLYTHE** quartet. Sept. 26: The **DAVE DOUGLAS** sextet. The first-call trumpeter for downtown projects of all bents, Douglas is one of the brightest lights on the avant-jazz scene—he's got the vision, the wit, and the I'll-try-anything spirit that's missing from most of today's straitlaced pups.

Zinc Bar, 90 W. Houston St. (477-8337)—Wednesdays in September belong to the **PHILIP HARPER** trio. Before it was commonplace for hot-shot young trumpeters to arrive with every other Greyhound bus, Harper was out there blowing. Since the breakup of the popular Harper Brothers band, he's been going it alone, with considerable sagacity and poise. On Tuesdays, former Jazz Messenger **DALE BARLOW** takes the reins. Sundays feature Brazilian music.

Zinno, 126 W. 13th St. (924-5182)—Through Sept. 23: piano and bass with Vladimir Shafranov and Todd Coolman. Sept. 24: The Roy Meriwether duo. Dining.

Cesaria Evora, at the Bottom Line.

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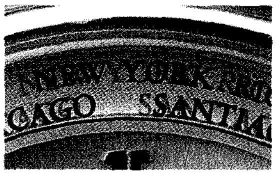

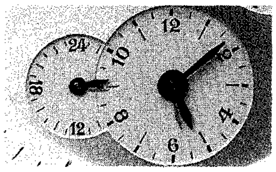

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ROCK, ETC.

Bottom Line, 15 W. 4th St., at Mercer St. (228-6300)—Sept. 20: **MAURA O'CONNELL.** Truly interpretive singers are a rare commodity outside of country and pop. This former lead singer of the Celtic group De Danaan is as good as she is rare. Her new album, "Stories," finds her deftly exploring songs by the likes of Mary Chapin Carpenter and Lennon and McCartney—and her duet with James Taylor on "Love Divine" is to die for. Sept. 21: **CESARIA EVORA.** A breath of cool tropical air from São Vincente (a tiny port island off the coast of Senegal), Evora is known as the barefoot diva, a reference to her performance style and to the earthy, laid-back feel of *morna,* the dreamy bossa-nova blues that makes her eponymous new release on Nonesuch so delightful. Although she's a star in France, she rarely performs in the States, which makes this appearance a special occasion. Sept. 26: **ROBERT EARL KEEN.** Like fellow Texans Steve Earle and Jimmie Dale Gilmore, this fine singer-songwriter packs a lot of hard-earned wisdom into his disarming tales of life on the road—and he has the cult following to prove it. His recent studio album, "Gringo Honeymoon," is both harrowing and hilarious—country music the way it ought to be.

Café Sin-é, 122 St. Marks Pl. (982-0370)—A small peach-walled storefront usually given over to a young sandals-and-socks sort of crowd. Sept. 20: The **BOSSA NOVA BEATNIKS.**

CBGB & OMFUG, 315 Bowery, at Bleecker St. (982-4052)—Rock and roll always sounds best in a dump, which may be why this legendary club is still thriving. Sept. 20: The Billsey Polars.

Chicago B.L.U.E.S., 73 Eighth Ave., at 13th St. (924-9755)—Dedicated to the music of the Windy City. Sept. 20-23: Guitarist **EDDY (THE CHIEF) CLEARWATER** plays the West Side blues.

The Cooler, 416 W. 14th St. (229-0785)—A lavender and stainless-steel dungeon deep in the heart of the meat district. Sept. 22: **CHAVEZ,** a kind of indie-rock supergroup, featuring former members of Live Skull and Bullet LaVolta. "Gone Glimmering," the band's very cool début on the very cool Matador Records, is one of the gems of 1995, but Chavez is best seen live—its canny, artful intensity provides arena-size bliss. Tuesday nights are given over to experimental d.j. spinoffs.

Duplex, 61 Christopher St., at Seventh Ave. (255-5438)—Everyone is a star here—the pianist, the bartender, the waiters, and the audience. The fabulous **DRESSING ROOM DIVAS** are in the house every Friday night.

Fez, 380 Lafayette St. (533-7000)—A comfortable neo-Moroccan bar hidden inside the Time Café. The downstairs room, where bands perform, is a fine spot to take in a show. Sept. 20: Former Bongos frontman **RICHARD BARONE.** Shimmering, melodic pop has had few better advocates over the past decade than this angel-voiced songwriter and guitarist. Sept. 22-23: The Loser's Lounge, a downtown collective devoted to postmodern reinterpretations, disembowels Donovan. The **MINGUS BIG BAND** still packs them in every Thursday. Dining.

Flannery's, 205 W. 14th St. (929-9589)—A well-scrubbed, amiable Irish pub with many of the classic features (pints of Guinness, non-stop TV sports) and a few of the near-classics (a CD jukebox, a portrait of Elvis).

Irving Plaza, 17 Irving Pl., at 15th St. (777-6800)—This sprawling two-floor establishment has been all things to all people: meeting hall, rock club, jazz club, Off Broadway theatre. Sept. 26: **DEL AMITRI.** "Twisted," the fourth album by this Glaswegian quartet, shows why the band has never quite hit the big time: it's packed with clichés in the form of boogie-woogie rockers and overwrought ballads. . . . ¶ The Swing Dance Society gathers here every Sunday, with sets from eight until midnight. For information on the society, call 696-9737.

Knitting Factory, 74 Leonard St., between Broadway and Church St. (219-3055)—Sept. 24: Trip-hop with virtual-reality guy **JARON LANIER.** Sept. 26: **SHELLAC,** led by noise kingpin Steve Albini, the former rock journalist who invented chain-saw guitar (and the producer of Nirvana's menacing "In Utero").

Limelight, Sixth Ave. at 20th St. (807-7850)—Sept. 24: The **REVEREND HORTON HEAT.** Having begun his career playing guitar in a Texas juvenile correctional facility, the Reverend has for the past seven years entertained audiences across the country with his Vegas-style stage antics and the irreverent sermons he delivers between songs. Wednesday night is Disco 2000.

Maxwell's, 1039 Washington St., Hoboken (1-201 798-4064)—Sept. 23: The **GEFKENS.** Sept. 24: From Chapel Hill, North Carolina, the headquarters of indie rock, come the fab sounds of **BEN FOLDS FIVE,** a smart piano-based trio led by Ben Folds, who plays a wondrously jaunty baby grand and sings like a cross between Joe Jackson and Freddie Mercury.

Mercury Lounge, 217 E. Houston St. (260-4700)—Past the long bar, you'll find an exposed-brick room and a stage packed with some very hip rock acts. Sept. 21: **J. MASCIS.** Sept. 23-24: The country-rock band **BLUE RODEO.**

Monkey Bar, 60 E. 54th St. (838-2600)—Beyond the monkey murals, there's a bright see-and-be-seen dining arena that's perfect for committing high-profile indiscretions in a strapless gown. But the place to be is the dark and crowded bar up front, by the grand piano, where the bar stools look like stuffed olives. You perch on the pimiento. Dining.

Nell's, 246 W. 14th St. (675-1567)—A Victorian-style club, home to an eclectic crowd of downtown youngsters dancing to throbbing funk and techno-pop.

Les Poulets, 16 W. 22nd St. (229-2000)—The name may be French, but the music here is Latin: expect salsa, merengue, and, now and then, a cha-cha. Dining.

Sidewalk Café, 94 Avenue A (473-7373)—Singer-songwriter **RUTH GERSON** has the floor here on Tuesday evenings.

S.O.B.'s, 204 Varick St., at W. Houston St. (243-4940)—Sept. 20: **BOBBY BYRD.** Once dubbed "Soulbrother No. 1½," Byrd first garnered attention in the fifties for his work with James Brown and the Famous Flames; a decade later he became revered as the gritty second voice on Brown smashes like "Sex Machine" and "Soul Power." Far more than a backup singer, Byrd played Strayhorn to Brown's Ellington, co-writing, arranging, and producing much of the Godfather of Soul's best work. His own recordings, collected in the fun (if uneven) new anthology "Bobby Byrd Got Soul: The Best of Bobby Byrd," display a formidable entertainer with a powerful voice, and in concert he's truly exciting, tearing through his catalogue with passion and verve. Sept. 22: The rollicking Haitian funk band **BOUKMAN EKSPERYANS.** Dining.

Tramps, 51 W. 21st St. (727-7788)—**LUNA** drifts in on Sept. 23. Led by Harvard grad Dean Wareham, the man who drove Galaxie 500 to college-rock greatness, this New York quartet has become adept at a dreamy kind of music that's so unabashedly derivative it's disposable *and* eternal. The touchstone here is the ever-present influence of the Velvet Underground (the late Sterling Morrison appeared on the band's last record, "Bewitched," to add a touch of authenticity). Luna's new effort, "Penthouse," features a guest appearance by ex-Televison guitarist Tom Verlaine.

Webster Hall, 125 E. 11th St. (353-1600)—A byzantine disco wonderland with four floors, a coffee shop, and a wig boutique. Wednesday is drag night. Psychedelic Thursdays feature grunge acts and cheap beer.

Wetlands, 161 Hudson St. (966-4225)—Sept. 22: Moon Boot Lover.

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ART

MUSEUMS AND LIBRARIES

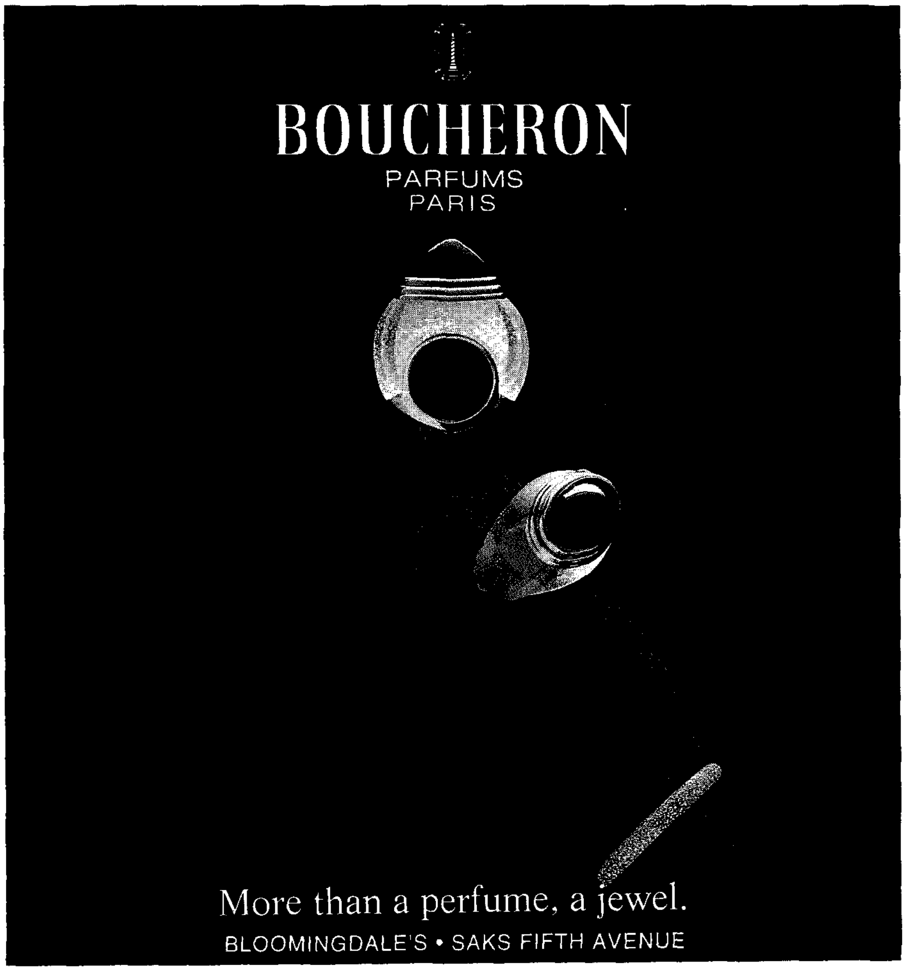
Metropolitan Museum, Fifth Ave. at 82nd St.—"Goya in the Metropolitan Museum of Art," which comprises the Met's entire collection of works by the Spanish master—including seventeen paintings and more than three hundred and fifty etchings, lithographs, and drawings—addresses the reattribution of certain works over time. . . . ¶ The museum's collection of large paintings and frescoes by Giovanni Battista Tiepolo has been reinstalled, at the top of the main staircase, above the Great Hall. . . . ¶ The hundred works in "The Renaissance in France: Drawings from the École des Beaux-Arts, Paris" form a survey of superb draftsmanship. Through Nov. 12. . . . ¶ Trenchcoats, epaulets, tartans, aviator glasses, khaki, and many other elements of civilian dress were recruited from the militaries of the world. "Swords Into Ploughshares," in the Costume Institute, offers a hundred outfits and a host of visual links between the wardrobes of the warrior and the leisure classes. Through Nov. 26. . . . ¶ "Pages of Perfection: Islamic Paintings and Calligraphy from the Russian Academy of Sciences, St. Petersburg." . . . **NOTE:** The museum's roof garden is open, when weather permits, until Oct. 29. (Open Tuesdays through Sundays, 9:30 to 5:15, and Friday and Saturday evenings until 8:45.)

Museum of Modern Art, 11 W. 53rd St.—"Alfred Stieglitz at Lake George," ninety-three photographs taken at the artist's upstate retreat, most of them from the twenties and thirties. . . . ¶ "Light Construction" examines, through models, large photographs, and drawings, the concepts of transparency and translucency in contemporary architecture. Starts Sept. 21. . . . ¶ Leon Levinstein's street photographs of people in New York neighborhoods from the fifties through the seventies. Through Oct. 12. . . . ¶ "Impressions of Nature" brings together a wide variety of modern landscape prints and paintings. (Open Saturdays through Tuesdays, 11 to 6; Thursdays and Fridays, noon to 8:30.)

Guggenheim Museum, Fifth Ave. at 89th St.—Selections from the permanent collection are on view. (Open Sundays through Wednesdays, 10 to 6; Fridays and Saturdays, 10 to 8.)

Guggenheim Museum SoHo, 575 Broadway—A survey of the conceptual photography of Dieter Appelt, supplemented by sculptural objects made by the artist for inclusion in these images. Through Nov. 5. . . . ¶ Fluorescent light sculptures from 1963 to 1987 by Dan Flavin. (Open Wednesdays through Sundays, 11 to 6, and Saturday evenings until 8.)

Whitney Museum of American Art, Madison Ave. at 75th St.—A terrific and illuminating double bill: "Edward Hopper and the American Imagination" (through Oct. 15) and "Florine Stettheimer: Manhattan Fantastica" (through Nov. 5). Hopper's work, with its solitary figures moving like somnambulists through otherwise vacant streets and interiors, embodies a very American vision of urban loneliness transformed by inexplicable moments of transcendence. Stettheimer, by contrast, epitomized, in both her art and her life, the fertile marriage of café society and the avant-garde. Her effervescent paintings record the milieu she cultivated (it was quite a set: Carl Van Vechten, Parker Tyler, Virgil Thomson, and Marcel Duchamp were all among the regulars) in moods of brittle irony and poetic reverie. . . . ¶ "Views from Abroad: European Perspectives on American Art." Through Oct. 1. . . . ¶ "Gazing Back: Shigeko Kubota and Mary Lucier." Kubota, in her video sculptures, reinterprets Duchamp, while Lucier, in her video installation, spins Monet. Through Sept. 24. . . . ¶ Works on paper by Jackson Pollock. Through Oct. 23. (Open Wednesdays, and Fridays through Sundays, 11 to 6; Thursdays, 1 to 8.)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American Museum of Natural History, Central Park W. at 79th St.—A hundred and forty botanical watercolors, illustrations, engravings, and lithographs are on view; a third of them are of orchids. Among the artists represented are Pierre-Joseph Redouté, Margaret Mee, Marilena Pistoia, and Georg Dionys Ehret. . . . ¶ The skeletons of some one hundred saurischian and ornithischian dinosaurs have been cleaned and repositioned, and they're waiting for you. (Open daily, 10 to 5:45, and Friday and Saturday evenings until 8:45.)

Jewish Museum, Fifth Ave. at 92nd St.—"Russian Jewish Artists in a Century of Change, 1890-1990," a large exhibition of paintings, sculptures, photographs, and graphic works by fifty artists, including Eric Bulatov, Léon Bakst, Marc Chagall, Ilya Kabokov, El Lissitzky, and Komar & Melamid. Starts Sept. 21. (Open Sundays through Thursdays, except Sept. 25-26, from 11 to 5:45. Closes at 3 on Sept. 24.)

Morgan Library, 29 E. 36th St.—"From Jackson to Lincoln: Democracy and Dissent," a helping of Americana—including letters, manuscripts, books, and drawings—from the Gilder Lehrman Collection. The issues of the day may have a familiar ring: race and gender relations, states' rights versus federal authority, Evangelicalism, foreign intervention, and temperance. . . . ¶ Mostly French works on paper, by such masters as Watteau, Fragonard, David, Ingres, and Hüet, are on display in "Fantasy and Reality: Drawings from the Sunny Crawford von Bülow Collection." (Open Tuesdays through Fridays, 10:30 to 5; Saturdays, 10:30 to 6; Sundays, noon to 6.)

Museo del Barrio, Fifth Ave. at 104th St.—Luis Camnitzer's installation, "Amanaplanacanalpanama," includes a canal made of resin and a canal lock made of children's construction toys. . . . ¶ "Four Corners/Cuatro Esquinas," recent oil paintings and charcoal drawings by José Morales. (Open Wednesdays through Sundays, 11 to 5.)

The New Museum, 583 Broadway—"Temporarily Possessed," an exhibit drawn from the museum's semi-permanent collection (works which are retained for ten to twenty years). Among the artists are Dennis Adams, Ida Applebroog, Bob Flanagan, Jenny Holzer, Sherrie Levine, Nancy Spero, and Krzysztof Wodiczko. (Open Wednesdays through Sundays, noon to 6, and Saturday evenings until 8.)

GALLERIES—UPTOWN

(Unless otherwise noted, galleries are open Tuesdays through Saturdays, from around 10 or 11 to between 5 and 6.)

John Button (1929-82) / **Nancy Hagin**—Sketchbook-size gouaches on paper, made in Mexico during the summer of 1958. / Still-lifes of household objects found at flea markets and yard sales. Both shows through Oct. 7. (Fischbach, 24 W. 57th St.)

Joseph DiGiorgio—Large landscapes, done in a modified Pointillist style, of the Oregon coast and rain forest. Through Oct. 21. (O'Hara, 41 E. 57th St.)

Jean Dubuffet (1901-85)—Boldly colorful paintings from the early eighties that recall earlier works in the artist's *art brut* œuvre. Through Sept. 30. (Emmerich, 41 E. 57th St.)

Sol LeWitt—Large multicolored gouaches on paper, consisting of many layers of wavy lines. Through Oct. 21. (Gagosian, 980 Madison Ave., at 76th St.)

Paul Manes—Impastoed and glazed paintings, some with canvas or newsprint collages, that have bowls as their subject: bowls stacked in columns or cascading everywhere. Through Oct. 7. (Marisa del Re, 41 E. 57th St.)

Marisol—The artist's first solo show in six years consists of her familiar portrait sculptures made of wood beams and plywood. Starts Sept. 20. Through Oct. 21. (Marlborough, 40 W. 57th St. Open Mondays.)

Short List—**Joseph Bartscherer,** Marian Goodman, 24 W. 57th St. Open Mondays; through Sept. 30. . . . **James Lee Byars,** Werner, 21 E. 67th St. Open Mondays; through Oct. 21. . . . **George Condo** and **Julio Gonzalez,** Pace Wildenstein, 32 E. 57th St. Through Oct.

21. . . . **WILLEM DE KOONING,** C & M Arts, 45 E. 78th St. Through Nov. 18. . . . **MARSHA PELS,** Sculpture Center, 167 E. 69th St. Through Sept. 30. . . . **JACKSON POLLOCK,** McCoy, 41 E. 57th St. Open Mondays; through Oct. 28. . . . **PAT STEIR,** Robert Miller, 41 E. 57th St. Through Oct. 14. . . . **ANDY WARHOL,** Sheehan, 41 E. 57th St. Open Mondays; through Oct. 14.

GALLERIES—DOWNTOWN

DONALD BAECHLER—Early paintings in the artist's signature cartoonish, sometimes even crude style. Through Oct. 21. (Shafrazi, 119 Wooster St.)

CARROLL DUNHAM / LARI PITTMAN—New stuff from two of the most entertaining bad-boy painters working today. Dunham's big, organic forms have room to roam in a nine-by-fifteen-foot canvas the artist has been working on for years. / Pittman's hypersexual, hypergraphic paintings now sport additional imagery: planes, helicopters, and other things militaristic. Both shows through Oct. 14. (Gorney, 100 Greene St.)

JACK FEATHERLY—The artist's first New York solo show offers multi-image paintings à la Rosenquist and Rauschenberg, with figures that evoke an idealized home life of the fifties and sixties. Through Oct. 7. (Freire, 580 Broadway.)

FELIX GONZALEZ-TORRES—The artist's new work, "Untitled (Vultures)" (1995), consists of fourteen framed photographs of the birds, singly or in groups, but you wouldn't know it, since they look either abstract or like tiny gray specks in a gray sky. Through Oct. 14. (Rosen, 130 Prince St.)

WOLFGANG LAIB—An installation of large ships made of beeswax, hoisted up on old wood beams. Through Oct. 21. (Sperone Westwater, 142 Greene St.)

KERRY JAMES MARSHALL—"The Garden Project," four figurative paintings, each about ten feet square, dealing with public-housing projects in Chicago that have the word "garden" in their names. Through Oct. 7. (Shainman, 560 Broadway.)

MATTHEW MCCASLIN—A video installation in which fourteen monitors play time-lapse sequences of flowers opening and withering. Through Oct. 14. (Klein, 40 Wooster St.)

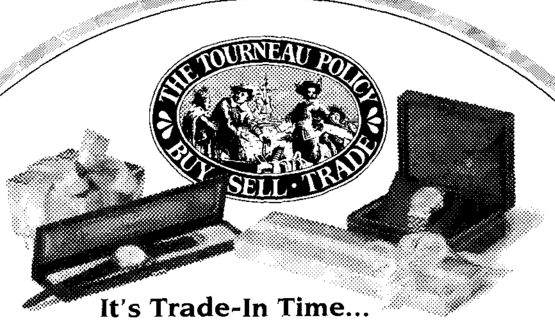
DAVID RABINOWITCH—"Box Trough Assemblages" (1963), sculptures made with many sixty-by-forty-inch sheets of metal. Through Oct. 28. (Blum, 99 Wooster St.)

JOSEPH STASHKEVETCH / JAMES MAKINS—Very large grisaille drawings based on photographs of abandoned docks, railroad depots, roller coasters, and other urban wastelands. / Monochromatic, unglazed porcelain vessels in still-life arrangements. Both shows through Oct. 8. (Morris Healy, 530 W. 22nd St. Open Wednesdays through Sundays, 11 to 6.)

FRANK STELLA—Steel, aluminum, and bronze wall reliefs from the past two decades, along with hand-colored and collaged screen prints. Through Oct. 7. (Baghoomian, 163 Mercer St.)

JACKIE WINSOR—New, smallish plaster-and-concrete square sculptures set into the gallery's walls. Through Oct. 21. (Cooper, 155 Wooster St.)

SHORT LIST—**UDI ALONI** and **SIGAL PRIMOR,** Klagsbrun, 51 Greene St. Through Sept. 30. . . . **ALEX BAG,** 303 Gallery, 89 Greene St. Through Oct. 21. . . . **ELLEN CANTOR,** Postmasters, 80 Greene St. Through Oct. 8. . . . **WILLIAM CHILDRESS,** Gibson, 568 Broadway. Through Sept. 30. . . . **HANNE DARBOVEN,** Castelli, 420 West Broadway. Through Oct. 7. . . . **KEITH EDMIER,** Petzel, 26 Wooster St. Through Oct. 19. . . . **HOLLY HUGHES,** Arstark, 568 Broadway. Through Oct. 14. . . . **BILL JENSEN,** Boone, 417 West Broadway. Through Oct. 21. . . . **RONALD JONES,** Metro Pictures, 150 Greene St. Through Oct. 14. . . . **RAYMOND PETTIBON** and **SIGMAR POLKE,** Zwirner, 43 Greene St. Through Oct. 14. . . . **ROBERT RAUSCHENBERG,** Gagosian, 136 Wooster St. Starts Sept. 23. . . . **KIKI SMITH,** Pace Wildenstein, 142 Greene St. Through Oct. 21. . . . **ROYCE WEATHERLY,** Gavin Brown, 558 Broome St. Open Wednesdays through Saturdays, noon to 7; through Oct. 7.



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OTHER VENUES

Gary Panter—Drawings, paintings, sketchbooks, and collaborative works by the artist who created the underground-comic character Jimbo and was the graphic designer for "Pee-wee's Playhouse." Through Sept. 25. (Pierogi 2000, 167 N. 9th St., Williamsburg. Open Saturdays through Mondays, noon to 6.)

AUCTIONS AND ANTIQUES

Asian Art on the Block—The big houses go head to head this week with sales of Asian art works. Christie's offers three auctions of Chinese pieces: two single-owner collections on Sept. 21 and an impressive catchall on Sept. 22. (Park Ave. at 59th St. 546-1000.) . . . Sotheby's ranges wider, presenting art from Korea (Sept. 20), India and Southeast Asia (Sept. 21), and China (Sept. 22-23). (York Ave. at 72nd St. 606-7000.)

Self-portrait, with family, by Sally Mann (Houk Friedman).

Into the Brooch—A sale of estate jewelry, glittering with diamonds, rubies, and sapphires. (William Doyle, 175 E. 87th St. 427-2730. Sept. 21 at 10.)

Into the Binding—An auction of fine editions of nineteenth-century books. (Swann Galleries, 104 E. 25th St. 254-4710. Sept. 21 at 10:30.)

Into the Bottle—Morrell & Company holds its first wine auction of the season. Highlights include "vertical tasting" lots from notable vineyards of Bordeaux and California, as well as the first major American offering of Massandra wines—especially port, sherry, and rosé muscat—from the Crimean cellars formerly used by the czars. (Union League Club, 38 E. 37th St. Sept. 23 at 10 and 2. For information, call 688-9370.)

Armory Antiques Show—More than a hundred dealers offer objects ranging from Egyptian antiquities to Pennsylvania Dutch slipware. (7th Regiment Armory, Park Ave. at 66th St. Sept. 20-24. For information, call 472-1180.)

New York Autumn Art Fair—Galleries, dealers, and individual artists gather to create a collectors' supermarket. (New York Coliseum, Columbus Circle. Sept. 21-24. For information, call 1-800 827-7170.)

Vintage Fashion and Antique Textile Show—Metropolitan Antiques, 110 W. 19th St. 463-0200. Sept. 22-24.

Gladstone Antiques Show and Carriage Exhibition—Hamilton Farm, Pottersville Rd., Gladstone, N.J. *Sept. 22-24. For information*, call 1-908 234-1251.

PHOTOGRAPHY

Dieter Appelt / Edward Weston (1886-1958)—Conceptual self-portraiture, often in the form of several photographs arranged in grids. (A retrospective of Appelt's work is at the Guggenheim Museum SoHo, through Nov. 5.) / A group of rare, vintage prints from the twenties through the early forties, along with several of the photographer's pepper and shell studies. Both shows through Oct. 14. (Pace-MacGill, 32 E. 57th St.)

Hans Bellmer (1902-75)—The German Surrealist's photographic activity was sporadic. Besides the well-known doll studies he had only two other subjects: his lovers Nora Mitrani (1946) and Unica Zurn (1958). His explicit nudes of them are on view, along with a selection of drawings. Through Oct. 21. (Ubu, 16 E. 78th St.)

Imogen Cunningham (1883-1976)—A survey of her long, prolific career, including portraits, figures, landscapes, cityscapes, and flowers. Through Nov. 4. (Greenberg, 120 Wooster St.)

Jimmy De Sana (1950-90)—A survey of the artist's career, including black-and-white photographs from the books "101 Nudes" and "Submission," color work that is more experimental, and portraits from the worlds of music and art. Through Oct. 22. (Hearn, 530 W. 22nd St. Open Wednesdays through Sundays, 11 to 6.)

Frank Gohlke—Landscapes shot during the past twenty-three years: grain elevators, snow-blanketed farms, Northeastern river valleys, post-tornado Wichita Falls (Texas), and post-eruption Mt. St. Helens, to name just a few. Through Oct. 14. (Benrubi, 52 E. 76th St.)

Karl Lagerfeld—Portraits and landscapes by the German fashion designer. Through Oct. 11. (Leica, 670 Broadway. Opens Saturdays at noon.)

Sally Mann—Recent photographs of the artist's family, in which the rural Virginia landscape assumes a prominent role. Through Nov. 4. (Houk Friedman, 851 Madison Ave., at 70th St.)

Richard Misrach / Harold Edgerton (1903-90)—In the latest series from his desert explorations, Misrach looks up into the sky and comes away with expansive—sometimes riveting—fields of color. / "Acts of Destruction," the fascinating effects of arrows, bullets, hammers, and explosions on innocent balloons, playing cards, and telephone books. Both shows through Oct. 21. (Danziger, 130 Prince St.)

Tina Modotti (1896-1942)—Street photographs, still-lifes with puppets, and other works made in Mexico between 1923 and 1929, which reveal a unique marriage of political consciousness and formalist aesthetics. Through Nov. 4. (Throckmorton, 153 E. 61st St.)

Todd Webb / Andrew Moore—"New York, 1946," vintage prints of scenes in Harlem, on the Third Avenue El platform, in Chinatown, at Coney Island, and on the Lower East Side. / Large-scale works from the series "New York Variations," in which the artist conflates architectural details (from the Public Library, the old City Hall subway station, the ruins of the mental hospital on Roosevelt Island), producing poetic explorations of the city. Both shows through Oct. 15. (Richardson, 560 Broadway.)

Group Show—Photographs by contemporary sculptors, including Petah Coyne, Dan Graham, Bryan Hunt, Mary Miss, Kenneth Snelson, and Hannah Wilke. Through Oct. 28. (Laurence Miller, 138 Spring St.)

"Being There"—The existential aspects of landscape photography as elucidated by curator Vik Muniz. Included are works by Gustave LeGray, Hiroshi Sugimoto, Richard Misrach, Gaylen Gerber, and Frederick Sommer. Through Oct. 7. (Baldacci, 41 E. 57th St.)

"Seeing Things"—Photographs from 1844 to the present, in a show that deals with the concepts of gaze and perception. Among the fifty artists are Lisette Model, August Sander, Edouard Baldus, Diane Arbus, Garry Winogrand, and Eugène Atget. Through Oct. 7. (Emmerich, 41 E. 57th St.)

"The Magic of Play"—This exploration of goofing off, gaming, and having fun features more than a hundred works by twenty-two photographers, including Danny Lyon, Mary Ellen Mark, Jacques Henri Lartigue, Lewis Carroll, and Ralph Eugene Meatyard. Through Oct. 1. (Main Waiting Room, Grand Central Terminal.)

International Center of Photography, 1130 Fifth Ave., at 94th St.—"Nagasaki Journey: The Photographs of Yosuke Yamahata." Pictures taken in that city on August 10, 1945, the day after the bombing, by a twenty-eight-year-old Japanese Army photographer. Through Oct. 1. . . . ¶ The war in the Pacific, as seen through the cover photographs and photo essays of *Life*-magazine correspondents. Through Oct. 1. (Open daily, except Mondays, 11 to 6, and Tuesday evenings until 8.)

International Center of Photography Midtown, Sixth Ave. at 43rd St.—"The Garden of Earthly Delights: Photographs by Edward Weston and Robert Mapplethorpe." Still-lifes, nudes, and portraits, hung side by side in comparative groupings. Through Nov. 26. (Open daily, except Mondays, 11 to 6, and Tuesday evenings until 8.)

Short List—alison bixby, Grand Central Terminal, 42nd St. Corridor. Through Sept. 23. . . . **jim dow,** Borden, 560 Broadway. Through Oct. 16. . . . **neil folberg,** Burden, 20 E. 23rd St. Through Oct. 20. . . . **richard gere,** Robert Miller, 41 E. 57th St. Through Oct. 14. . . . **allen ginsberg,** De Nagy, 41 W. 57th St. Through Oct. 7. . . . **marilyn minter,** Postmasters, 80 Greene St. Through Oct. 8. . . . **alexander rodchenko,** Schickler, 52 E. 76th St. Through Oct. 31. . . . **willy ronis,** Witkin, 415 West Broadway. Through Oct. 28. . . . **penelope umbrico,** Saul, 560 Broadway. Through Oct. 14.

(See the museum listings for photography exhibitions at the Museum of Modern Art and the Guggenheim Museum SoHo.)

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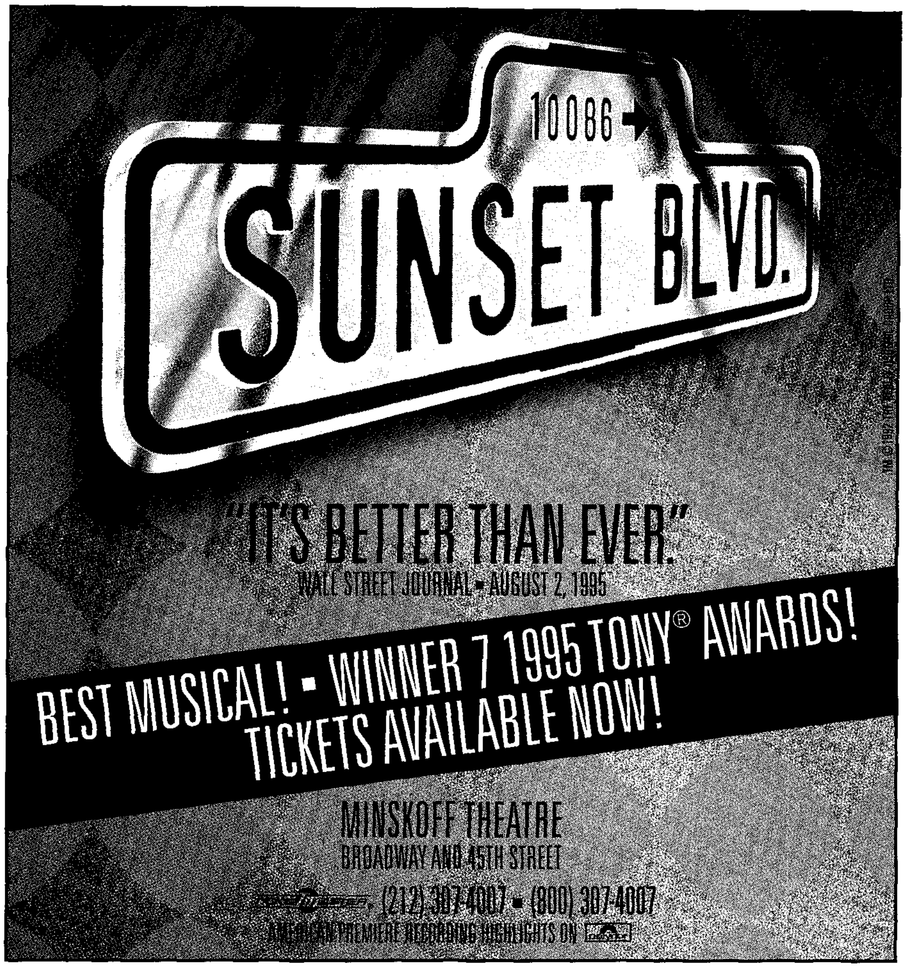

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CLASSICAL MUSIC

Resurrection

When the Jupiter Symphony officially succumbed—to funding malnutrition—in the winter of 1992, Jens Nygaard, its founding conductor, considered throwing in the towel. But Nygaard was trained as a musician, not a mortician, and his group didn't stay dead for long: within nine months, the Jupiter had stirred back into tentative action, and this season its hyperactive schedule—three performances of a new concerto-centered program every other week from mid-September to mid-May—qualifies it as one of the city's busiest orchestras.

"We are blessed with an extraordinary roster of soloists this year," Nygaard reports, "and every one of them came to us and volunteered to perform for free." It's an impressive bunch: clarinettist Charles Neidich and pianist William Wolfram share the spotlight in this week's concerts (on September 25 and 26), and future ones will welcome such stars as pianists Ruth Laredo and Anton Kuerti. This year works by Mozart and Beethoven will keep company with concertos that instrumentalists rarely get to play, by Weber, Spohr, Mercadante, Czerny, Viotti, and Field. At the Jupiter's concerts, in the Church of the Good Shepherd—an airy barn of a hall that abuts Lincoln Center—the audience sits in concentric circles around the players while Nygaard presides over the events like a genial parson.

OPERA

New York City Opera—**MATHIS DER MALER,** by Hindemith. (Sept. 20 and Sept. 26 at 8.) . . . **DON GIOVANNI.** (Sept. 21 at 8.) . . . **LA TRAVIATA.** (Sept. 22 at 8.) . . . **THE MIKADO.** (Sept. 23 at 1:30.) . . . **RIGOLETTO.** (Sept. 23 at 8.) . . . **CARMEN.** (Sept. 24 at 1:30.) (New York State Theatre. 870-5570.)

Amato Opera—Presenting "Tosca." (Amato Opera Theatre, 319 Bowery, at 2nd St. 228-8200. Sept. 23 at 7:30 and Sept. 24 at 2:30.)

ORCHESTRAS AND CHORUSES

New York Philharmonic—At Avery Fisher Hall, Kurt Masur conducting. Sept. 20 at 8: The opening concert of the orchestra's hundred-and-fifty-third season features music by Strauss (his symphonic poem "Don Juan" and a group of five orchestral songs, with soprano Jessye Norman) and Wagner (the Prelude to "Die Meistersinger" and, from "Götterdämmerung," Siegfried's Funeral Music and Brünnhilde's Immolation Scene, again with Ms. Norman). . . . ¶ Sept. 21-23 at 8 and Sept. 26 at 7:30: Strauss's "Don Juan," D-Minor "Burleske" (featuring pianist Cécile Ousset), and "Dance of the Seven Veils" (from "Salome"), as well as Wagner's Prelude to "Die Meistersinger," Preludes to Act I and Act III of "Lohengrin," and Overture to "Tannhäuser." (875-5030.)

Sejong Soloists—A twelve-member string ensemble from Korea, in a program that includes Rossini's String Sonata No. 6, Wolf's "Italian Serenade," and a pair of concertos by Vivaldi (featuring violinist Livia Sohn). (Alice Tully Hall. 875-5050. Sept. 22 at 8.)

Youthful Voices—The Australian Youth Choir and the Philadelphia Boys Choir and Chorale perform twentieth-century choral pieces. (Carnegie Hall. 247-7800. Sept. 23 at 8.)

Jupiter Symphony—Jens Nygaard leads his orchestra in Weber's F-Minor Clarinet Concerto (featuring Charles Neidich) and Grieg's Piano Concerto (with William Wolfram), as well as in symphonic works by C. P. E. Bach and Johan Svendsen. (Good Shepherd Presbyterian Church, 152 W. 66th St. Sept. 25 at 2 and 7 and Sept. 26 at 8. For information about tickets for concerts, as well as for open rehearsals, call 799-1259.)

Philadelphia Orchestra—Wolfgang Sawallisch conducts Brahms's Piano Concerto No. 1 (with Ignat Solzhenitsyn) and Beethoven's Symphony No. 7. (Carnegie Hall. 247-7800. Sept. 26 at 8.)

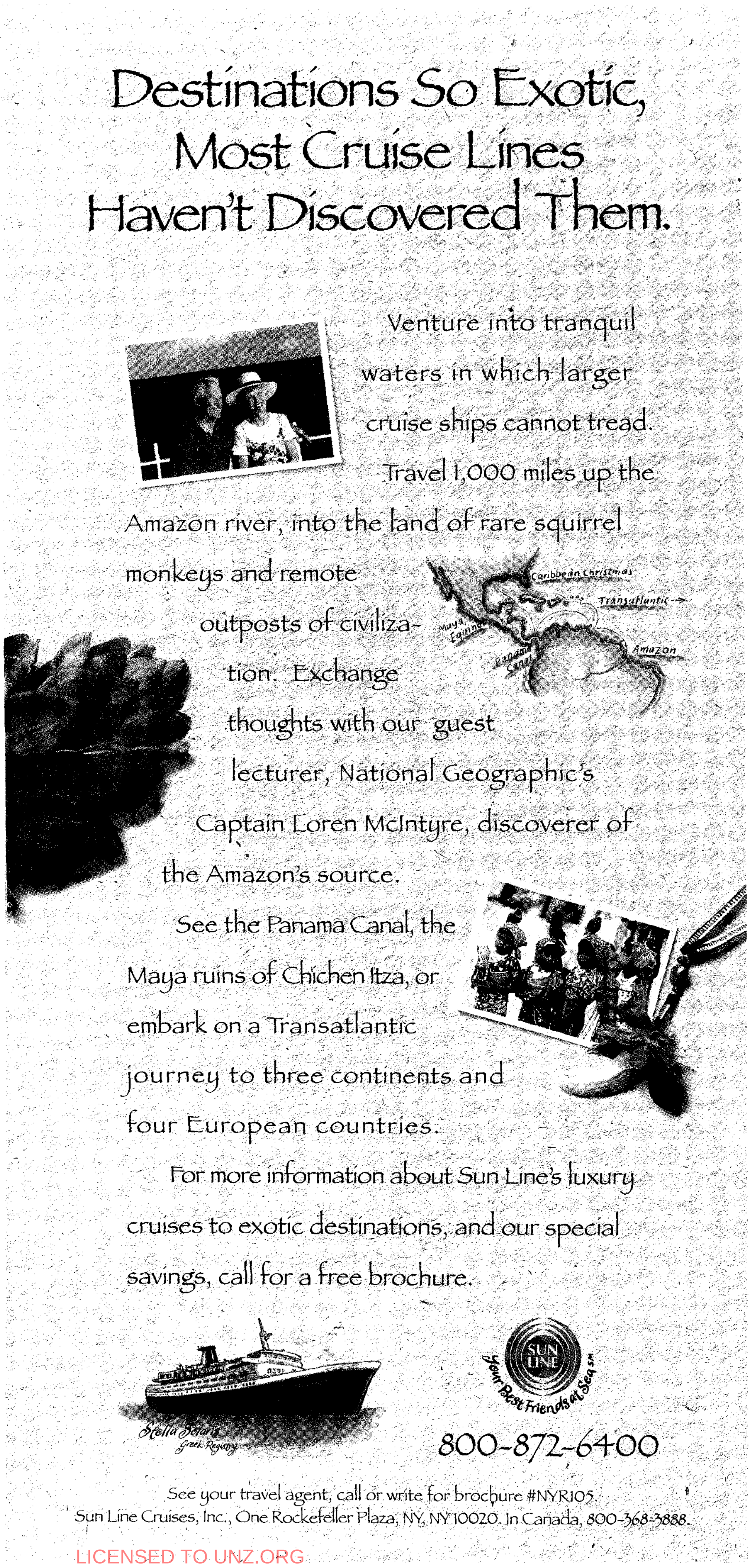
RECITALS

Lunchtime Treats—Free midday concerts. At Bryant Park: Actor Werner Klemperer joins musicians from the Juilliard School on Sept. 20 at 12:30, and soprano Lauren Flanigan offers a recital on Sept. 22 at 12:30. (Sixth Ave. at 42nd St.) . . . ¶ At Trinity Church: On Sept. 21 at 1, intrepid listeners can catch a concert by Tuyo, a Canadian ensemble that designs, builds, and plays its own instruments, which range from minute handheld objects to immense Rube Goldberg contraptions. (Broadway at Wall St.)

LISTENING BOOTH

Rule, Britannia—On THE LILY & THE LAMB (Harmonia Mundi), Anonymous 4 (the women's vocal quartet) illuminates medieval English chant and polyphony with uncannily pure intonation. The early years of Britain's idiosyncratic choral tradition are fervently explored by the Sixteen (directed by Harry Christophers) on THE VOICES OF ANGELS: MUSIC FROM THE ETON CHOIRBOOK, VOLUME 5 (Collins Classics), which traces the fifty-year transition from cloying mid-fifteenth-century consonance to mid-Renaissance complexity. Rhythmically intricate but spacious in conception, Robert Fayrfax's "O QUAM GLORIFICA" MASS (which, in 1511, earned the composer his Oxford doctorate) rings with excitement in a production by the Cardinall's Musick, a sixteen-voice Oxonian choir (ASV Gaudeamus), that is one of the season's finest listening experiences. Music lovers with a strong C.-of-E. bent will lift up their hearts in thanksgiving to Hyperion for releasing the third installment of PSALMS FROM ST. PAUL'S, an echoing traversal by the St. Paul's Cathedral Choir of all the Anglican-chant harmonizations in the Cathedral Psalter—recent entries as well as hoary Victorian standards from the 1875 edition. You could prolong the scent of incense by dipping into OXFORD CHURCH ANTHEMS (on Nimbus, with Oxford's Christ Church Cathedral Choir). On the secular side, don't overlook cello music by Britten and by his teacher Frank Bridge (played by Steven Doane, with pianist Barry Snyder, on—appropriately—Bridge Records); piano trios by Stanford, Holst, and Bax (with the Pirasti Trio, on ASV); and a two-disk set (on Hyperion) in which Alan Bates reads from Houseman's "A Shropshire Lad" and the superlative lieder team of tenor Anthony Rolfe Johnson and pianist Graham Johnson perform twenty-eight mostly elegiac settings of the poems by seven composers.

Paul Bowles Celebration—Concluding events in a mini-festival that focusses on the Tangier-based composer. Sept. 20 at 5: A symposium that includes a live interview with the composer and the screening of a documentary about him. (New School, 66 W. 12th St. 229-5690.) . . . ¶ Sept. 21 at 8: Jonathan Sheffer leads the Eos Ensemble in several works by Bowles and by his colleagues Silvestre Revueltas and Peggy Glanville-Hicks. Soprano Angelina Réaux, tenors Carl Halvorson and Peter Kazaras, dancer Robert LaFosse, and actors Tovuh Feldshuh, Tom Hulce, and Lee Richardson all get solo turns. (Alice Tully Hall. 875-5050.)



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BARGEMUSIC—In its last performances before a seven-week suspension for dry-dock maintenance, New York's floating concert hall presents duos by Mozart and Martinů, as well as Debussy's String Quartet. (Fulton Ferry Landing, Brooklyn. 1-718 624-4061. Sept. 21 at 7:30 and Sept. 24 at 4.)

NEW JUILLIARD ENSEMBLE—It's odd to see a billing for the "first live performance" of a piece, but the tag fits in the case of Ludovico Einaudi's Suite from "Salgari," which the Juilliard School's avant-gardists will play in this concert. The ensemble's director, Joel Sachs, explains: "Einaudi wrote 'Salgari' as a ballet score between 1991 and 1993 for the ISO dance company, but since it proved too expensive to travel with the requisite group of musicans—about twenty players—the work was recorded in a studio and ISO danced to the tape. The piece was then released as a CD, but I didn't feel that the full-length form held up when detached from the ballet. So, for us, Einaudi has condensed his seventy-five-minute score into a twenty-three-minute suite, a wonderful concert piece with striking soloistic writing." Also on the program are works by the Brazilian composer Marlos Nobre and the Iranian-American composer Reza Vali, as well as Stefan Wolpe's Chamber Pieces No. 1 and No. 2 (both written in the nineteen-sixties). (Juilliard Theatre, 155 W. 65th St. Sept. 22 at 8. For information about free tickets, which are required, call 769-7406.)

ESSEX STRING QUARTET—The foursome offers three early quartets by Mozart (K. 156, K. 157, and K. 158). (Le Refuge Inn, 620 City Island Ave., City Island, the Bronx. 1-718 885-2478. Sept. 24 at noon.)

ORPHEUS CHAMBER ENSEMBLE—Eight players from the Orpheus Chamber Orchestra perform Mozart's Oboe Quartet, Chopin's G-Minor Cello Sonata, Szymanowski's Romance for Violin and Piano, and Brahms's C-Minor Piano Quartet. (Kosciuszko Foundation, 15 E. 65th St. 734-2130. Sept. 24 at 3.)

SALON CONCERTS—At the Hotel Wales. Sept. 24 at 3: Arthur Abadi (age eleven) and his sister, Nomi (eight), Los Angeles-based pianists who have both been fulfilling orchestral engagements for several years, share the bill in a recital of solo works. . . . ¶ At 6 and 8: The pianist Rina Dokshitsky is joined by string-playing colleagues for music by Schumann and Bartók. (Madison Ave. at 92nd St. No tickets necessary.)

NEW YORK VIOLA SOCIETY—The club opens its fourth season with a recital by violists Misha Amory and Hsin-Yun Huang. (Mannes College of Music, 150 W. 85th St. Sept. 25 at 8. For information about tickets, call 924-7299.)

NICHOLAS ANGELICH—In his New York début recital, the 1994 gold medalist of Salt Lake City's Gina Bachauer International Piano Competition performs Schubert's C-Minor Sonata (D. 958), Ravel's "La Valse," and Rachmaninoff's "Études-Tableaux" (Op. 39). (Alice Tully Hall. 875-5050. Sept. 26 at 8.)

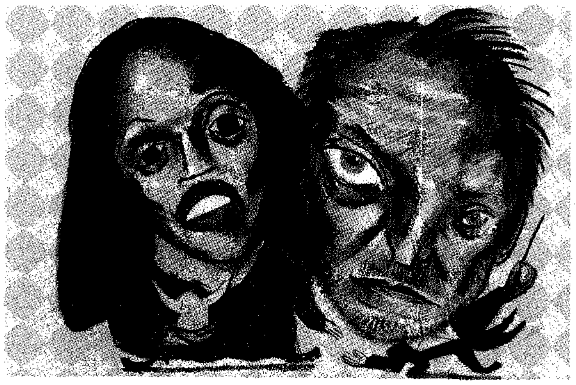
ABOVE AND BEYOND

CAMEOS—The Broadway Cares/Equity Fights AIDS flea market returns this Saturday, with its card-table gallery of Tony winners and soap stars. At 1 and 5, Sotheby's types auction off assorted walk-on roles (in "Frasier," "Sunset Boulevard," etc.) and stage tchotchkes (a skull signed by Ralph Fiennes, Greg Louganis's "Jeffrey" T-shirt, Randy Becker's robe from "Love! Valour! Compassion!"). Market tip: plan your day around the Saturday-matinée schedule. Shows start at 2, so the best times for stargazing come before and after; prime shopping, on the other hand, is during, when everyone's inside. (Shubert Alley, west of Broadway, between 44th and 45th Sts. Sept. 23, from 10 to 7:30.)

ISN'T IT NECROMANTIC?—Falconers, jousters, jesters, blacksmiths, luthiers—all those guys in codpieces no one has seen for centuries—will live again this Sunday at the Medieval Festival, on the grounds around the Cloisters. (Fort Tryon Park. Sept. 24, from noon to 6. For more information, call 795-1600.)

READINGS—Sept. 22 at 6:30: Poets Sara Berkeley and Katie Donovan read from their work in the anthology "Ireland's Women: Writings Past and Present." (Glucksman Ireland House, New York University, 1 Washington Mews. For more information, call 998-3950.) . . . ¶ Sept. 24 at 7: Short-fiction writers Barbara Jones, Steven Rinehart, and Tom Perrotta read a story each. (KGB, 85 E. 4th St. No tickets necessary.)

TALK—Sept. 20 at 7: Anne Rice, the author of "Interview with a Vampire," ventures into the night for a discussion with Michael Riley, the author of "Conversations with Anne Rice." (Symphony Space, Broadway at 95th St. 864-5400.)



Jessye Norman and Kurt Masur, opening the New York Philharmonic's new season.

AHMET GÖRGÜN

TOURS—Sept. 21 at 6: Gastronome Kit Garrett picks through the markets of Chinatown, in a hunt for such ingredients as lotus root, reedy lemongrass, and fuzzy melon. For more information, call 353-4196. . . . ¶ Sept. 24 at 7:30: Joe Spano of the Urban Rangers checks into popular hangouts in Prospect Park, on a tour of the feeding grounds of the red and little brown bats. For more information, call 1-800 201-7275.

SPORTS

LATE RALLIES—Baseball fans across the country cold-shouldered their teams this season. In New York, at least, this aloofness has been justifiable. The Yanks were on their way to a pennant when the strike struck; if they secure the wild-card spot this year, it may provide some compensation for losing out on last year's banner season. Until this month's hot streak, the '95 Yankee stories (McDowell's middle finger, the unholy alliance of Steinbrenner and Strawberry, the back-page braying over Mattingly's diminished skills), including the tangential ones (the Mick's death, the Scooter's retirement), were downers. The Mets' fortunes, on the other hand, have picked up. Despite a wipeout in the first part of the season, there is now hope for the future. In Pulsipher and Isringhausen, the team appears to have two skilled and solid pitching bulldogs. And Butch Huskey and Rico Brogna (at third and first, respectively) provide not only inspiring defense and wicked bats but two of the coolest names to step up to the plate in some time. But as the playoffs roll around the question remains: Are there enough Greg Madduxes, Hideo Nomos, and Cal Ripkens to begin thawing our hardball hearts?

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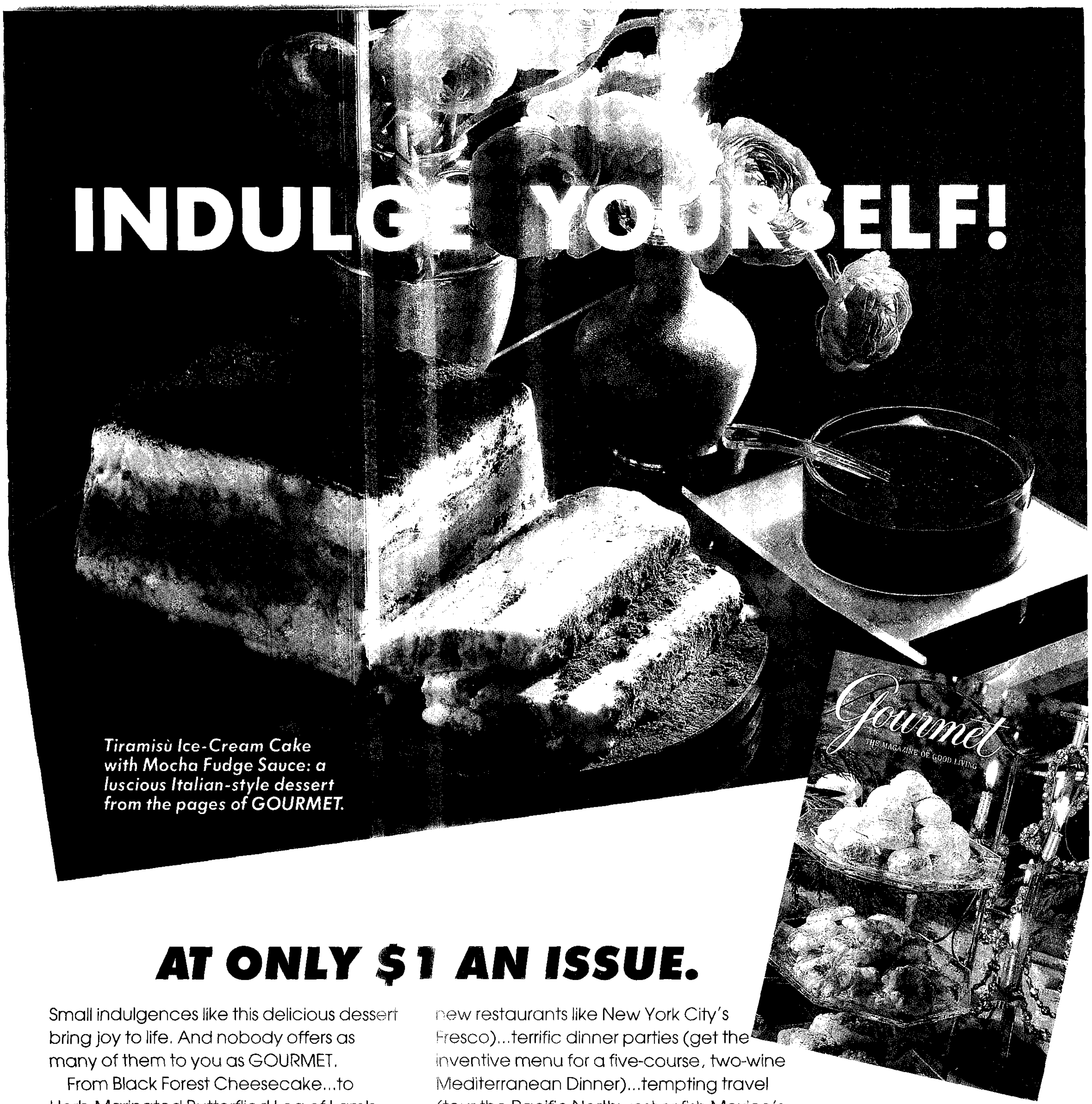

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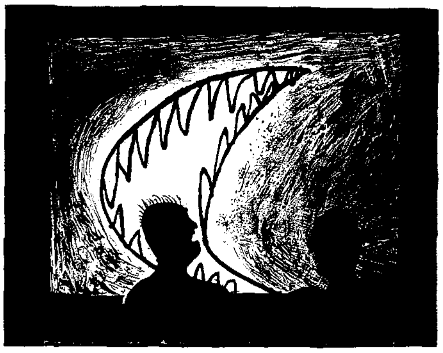


FILMS OPENING THIS WEEK

Canadian Bacon—The President of the United States (Alan Alda) declares war on Canada, in a comedy written and directed by Michael Moore. With John Candy, Rhea Perlman, Kevin Pollak, and Rip Torn. Opening September 22. (Village East Cinemas and 84th Street Sixplex.)

A Month by the Lake—Vanessa Redgrave, Edward Fox, and Uma Thurman star in a love story set on the shores of Lake Como just before the Second World War. Directed by John Irvin. Written by Trevor Bentham, from H. E. Bates's 1964 novella. Opening September 22.

A Reason to Believe—Douglas Tirola wrote and directed this story about a fraternity-party rape and its aftermath. With Allison Smith, Danny Quinn, and Jay Underwood. Opening September 22. (Plaza and Quad Cinema.)

The Run of the Country—A teen-ager (Matt Keeslar) in County Cavan, Ireland, runs away from his stern father (Albert Finney) and falls in love with a young woman from northern Ireland (Victoria Smurfit). Directed by Peter Yates. Adapted by Shane Connaughton from his 1991 novel. Opening September 22. (Cinema Village, Baronet, Chelsea Cinemas, and Lincoln Square.)

Seven—Brad Pitt and Morgan Freeman play police detectives out to solve a string of Biblically inspired murders, in a film written by Andrew Kevin Walker and directed by David Fincher. Opening September 22. (Village Theatre VII, 19th Street East 6, Murray Hill Cinemas, Cinema I, Orpheum VII, Lincoln Square, and Criterion Center.)

Showgirls—An erotic thriller by Paul Verhoeven, about an ambitious lap dancer (Elizabeth Berkley) in Las Vegas. With Kyle MacLachlan. Written by Joe Eszterhas. Opening September 22. (Village Theatre VII, 34th Street Showplace, First & 62nd Cinemas, Orpheum VII, Chelsea Cinemas, Lincoln Square, Olympia, and Criterion Center.)

Tie-Died: Rock 'n Roll's Most Deadicated Fans—Andrew Behar's documentary, filmed during the Grateful Dead's summer, 1994, tour, focusses on the scene before, after, and outside the shows. Accompanied by "A Conversation with Ken Kesey," an eight-minute film by Peter Shapiro. Opening September 22. (Village Theatre VII.)

CURRENT FILMS

(The signed notes are by Bruce Diones, Sarah Kerr, Anthony Lane, and Terrence Rafferty. If a movie has been reviewed in The Current Cinema, the date of its review is given. Theatre addresses are listed on page 36; for show times, call 777-FILM.)

Angus—The story of a teen-ager (Charles Talbert) who is trying to find out what "normal" is. Directed by Patrick Read Johnson. (Village East Cinemas, 19th Street East 6, Gotham Cinema, Orpheum VII, and Lincoln Square.)

Apollo 13—Ron Howard's movie, like the perilous 1970 lunar mission itself, gets home safely only by the skin of its teeth. Dean Cundey's cinematography is drab, James Horner's score is unbearable, and Howard retards the momentum with frequent cutaways to the astronauts' families, who are, unsurprisingly, mighty worried. But the acting—especially by Tom Hanks, Kevin Bacon, and Bill Paxton (as the astronauts) and Ed Harris (as a NASA flight controller)—is sharp and persuasive. And the screenplay, by William Broyles, Jr., and Al Reinert, makes the scientific details both comprehensible and exciting. In the end, this failed mission seems like the most impressive achievement of the entire space program: a triumph not of planning but of inspired improvisation.—T.R. (7/10/95) (23rd St. West Triplex, Ziegfeld, and Regency.)

Babe—Despite the improbable articulateness of the creatures in Chris Noonan's wonderfully imaginative talking-animal movie, they remain in character as animals: the movie never lets us forget that they don't see the world the same way we do. The title character is a piglet who wants to be a sheepdog. Babe and his friends—notably, a farmwise duck and a pair of proud Border collies—act out a comedy of animal manners that is much funnier and much cannier than any recent movie about human relationships: a lovely, stubbornly idiosyncratic fable of aspiration and survival.—T.R. (9/4/95) (First & 62nd Cinemas, 23rd St. West Triplex, and Olympia.)

Beyond Rangoon—John Boorman's mysteriously graceful adventure movie is set in Burma in 1988. A depressed American traveller (Patricia Arquette) becomes separated from her tour group and enters the dense, dangerous wilderness of the real Burma, where she falls into the company of political dissidents and winds up running for her life. Boorman's sense of rhythm gives the picture an arrowlike momentum that makes it seem much shorter than its ninety-nine minutes. It's an exciting film and, in the end, an overwhelmingly moving one—a masterpiece. Also with U Aung Ko, Frances McDormand, and Spalding Gray.—T.R. (8/21-28/95) (Village Theatre VII, First & 62nd Cinemas, Chelsea Cinemas, and Lincoln Square.)

Braveheart—Mel Gibson is the star, director, and co-producer of this hefty epic, which lasts nearly three hours and covers more than thirty years of medieval Scottish history. He plays William Wallace, the hero with the thrash-metal hair who decides to make life hell for the Englishmen who are crawling all over his country. The political argument that ensues is pretty dull, but the battle scenes are the loudest and most convincing in years: Gibson has learned from Kurosawa in lending a clarifying thrust to what is, essentially, chaos. With Patrick McGoohan, Catherine McCormack, and Sophie Marceau.—A.L. (6/5/95) (Village Theatre VII, New York Twin, Orpheum VII, Chelsea Cinemas, Lincoln Square, and Embassy.)

The Brothers McMullen—Perhaps this old-fashioned picture about three Irish-American brothers on Long Island and their fumbled dealings with women has struck a nerve because it's one of the rare romantic comedies aimed primarily at the fantasies of straight men. The movie was written and directed by the twenty-seven-year-old Edward Burns, who also co-stars as the cynical middle brother. His character gets a lot of mileage early on out of mean-spirited locker-room humor about his fear of commitment; his conversion to true love at the end is, by comparison, perfunctory and unconvincing.—S.K. (Angelika Film Center, First & 62nd Cinemas, Chelsea Cinemas, and Lincoln Square.)

Burnt by the Sun—Set in 1936, in the high summer of Stalinist rule, Nikita Mikhalkov's movie centers on a Soviet Army colonel (played by Mikhalkov) and the family group that circulates around him in an idyllic dacha. The idyll cracks when the state, in the person of a family friend (Oleg Menchikov), comes to wreak havoc. The director's eight-year-old daughter, Nadia, offers a sharp-eyed, wholly uncute performance, gazing at the unfolding events with the air of one who will never be able to banish them from her memory. The movie may sound dispiriting, but it has an amazing ability to cheer you up. In Russian.—A.L. (5/8/95) (Carnegie Hall Cinemas.)

CLOCKERS—The new Spike Lee picture is adapted from the 1992 thriller by Richard Price (the two collaborated on the screenplay), but thrills are low on the agenda of this nervy, knowing tale, which bristles with jokes and social problems where you would expect the plot to be. The clockers of the title—low-grade crack dealers who work the Brooklyn projects at all hours—belong to the only successful business in the neighborhood, an irony that gets the movie nicely fired up. Harvey Keitel plays a tired racist cop, and newcomer Mekhi Phifer a black kid suspected of murder, but neither of them is used as a star: instead Lee wants to build an ensemble piece and bring a small world onto the screen. To a large extent, he succeeds. The film shares the social ambitions, but not the mania, of "Do the Right Thing." Though Lee still can't resist a fancy visual trick from time to time, "Clockers" is, at its best—in its compound of the jaunty and the depressing—his ripest work to date.—A.L. (9/18/95) (34th Street Showplace, Manhattan Twin, Park & 86th Street Cinemas, Waverly, Chelsea Cinemas, 62nd & Broadway, Metro Cinema, and National Twin.)

CLUELESS—The Beverly Hills high school in writer-director Amy Heckerling's comedy (based loosely on Jane Austen's "Emma") is a world of cellular phones, nose jobs, and fast, funny mall-speak, where all the girls love sexy makeovers and all the boys are beautiful young pups. Alicia Silverstone plays a matchmaking high-school queen named Cher who is so naïvely confident that she doesn't see how manipulative her behavior is. With its charming performances, bubblegum colors, and intentionally funny product placements, the movie is like a kiss in a candy store—silly and sweet.—B.D. (Movieland 8th Street Triplex, 59th Street East Cinema, and Olympia.)

CRUMB—Terry Zwigoff's brilliant, scary documentary about the underground-comics artist R. Crumb. While the film is reviewing Crumb's career, from its psychedelic-era heyday to the present, and following him as he goes about his everyday activities, it's also telling a harrowing story about his damaged family. The movie is often funny, but what makes it extraordinary is that it explores, without presuming to explain, the sources of a unique and savage comic sensibility. And it shows us that Crumb's gift—the detachment that allows him to create such hilariously contemptuous images of the world around him (and inside him)—is also a kind of curse, or, at least, a nasty habit.—T.R. (5/1/95) (Film Forum 3.)

DANGEROUS MINDS—LouAnne Johnson (Michelle Pfeiffer), a divorced ex-Marine, teaches English in an urban high school, and her students are an unruly, education-resistant bunch—that is, a typical supporting cast for the heroic-teacher genre. Thanks to Pfeiffer's inventive acting, John N. Smith's movie does a fairly entertaining job of capturing the unscrupulous, guerrilla-like cunning of a good teacher in a bad school. But the cut-to-the-enlightenment dramaturgy of Ronald Bass's screenplay canonizes the heroine needlessly: Pfeiffer looks plenty good without a halo. Also with George Dzundza and Courtney B. Vance. Based on Johnson's memoir, "My Posse Don't Do Homework."—T.R. (8/21-28/95) (Village East Cinemas, Orpheum VII, Guild, and 84th Street Sixplex.)

DESPERADO—Director Robert Rodriguez follows up his cult feature "El Mariachi" with a similar story in an identical setting, throws in a big star, and comes up with the same old thing—fun with guns. The plot is not exactly Balzacian in its complexity: we watch the Mariachi kill a large number of unshaven men and go to bed with a smooth-skinned beauty as he moves toward an ultimate and rather tedious act of vengeance. What fun there is derives from the smart editing (Rodriguez did his own cutting, and he's quicker on the draw than most of the pistol-packers) and from Antonio Banderas, who, stepping neatly into the Mariachi's boots, lends irony and calm, and even a trace of sweetness, to a nothing role. Without him the picture would remain a hollow, high-speed exercise in style. (Fans of Quentin Tarantino will note with delight that their idol has a small supporting role. Foes will note with equal delight that he gets shot in the head.)—A.L. (9/11/95) (Movieland 8th Street Triplex, 19th Street East 6, 34th Street Showplace, First & 62nd Cinemas, Orpheum VII, 84th Street Sixplex, and Embassy.)

HACKERS—Six teen-age computer pranksters battle a white-collar terrorist out to make them take the fall for his crime, in a thriller directed by Iain Softley. (19th Street East 6, 34th Street Showplace, First & 62nd Cinemas, Orpheum VII, Waverly, 84th Street Sixplex, and Criterion Center.)

I CAN'T SLEEP—A thriller set in Paris, about an aspiring Lithuanian actress (Katerina Golubeva), a musician from the Antilles (Alex Descas), his drag-queen brother (Richard Courcet), and the elderly residents of a hotel, who are being preyed on by a serial killer. Directed by Claire Denis, who co-wrote the screenplay with Jean-Pol Fargeau. In French. (Quad Cinema and Lincoln Plaza Cinemas.)

THE INNOCENT—Ian McEwan's 1990 novel of love and Cold War intrigue in nineteen-fifties Berlin, adapted for the screen by the author. Starring Anthony Hopkins, Isabella Rossellini, and Campbell Scott. Directed by John Schlesinger. (Village East Cinemas and Cinema II.)

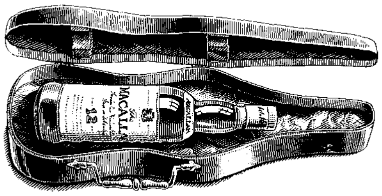
JEFFREY—In adapting his hip, funny 1993 stage hit, Paul Rudnick has lost much of its charm and humor. The story of Jeffrey (Steven Weber), a gay man who decides to become celibate (because the fear of AIDS has taken all the fun out of sex) and then meets Mr. Right, seems dated, and Jeffrey whines so much that you lose patience with him. There are some laughs, and the excellent supporting cast (particularly Patrick Stewart and Nathan Lane) keeps its clever lines afloat. Christopher Ashley directed.—B.D. (Quad Cinema and Carnegie Hall Cinemas.)

KIDS—Larry Clark's film follows some New York City teen-agers through a day and a night of largely self-destructive activity; these kids seem to be wandering in total darkness. Although the movie will undoubtedly be received as a wake-up call, a sobering report on a lost generation, what's fascinating—and unsettling—about it is Clark's unmistakable admiration for the recklessness of the young. The obsessive, ardent gaze he turns on his subjects as they stumble toward oblivion has a strangely aestheticizing effect; he can't help turning these wasted, aimless kids into icons of the beautiful and damned. Screenplay by Harmony Korine (who was nineteen when he wrote it).—T.R. (7/31/95) (Angelika Film Center, 19th Street East 6, Gemini, and Lincoln Plaza Cinemas.)

LAST OF THE DOGMEN—It begins like an ordinary prison-break movie, but when a bounty hunter (Tom Berenger, in a strong, sexy performance) is hired to track the escapees, the terrain turns unfriendly in a premodern way. The bounty hunter and an anthropologist (Barbara Hershey) follow the prisoners' trail into a remote territory occupied by a tribe of Cheyennes untouched by the twentieth century; and the writer-director, Tab Murphy, trots out seventies-era plotting (with modern life corrupting proud tradition) and pours "Dances with Wolves" syrup over cinematographer Karl Walter Lindenlaub's beautiful images. There are some tense scenes, and the mystery of the escape takes some time to unravel, but the movie shrivels up and dies from piousness.—B.D. (Lincoln Square. . . . ¶ Baronet; through Sept. 21.)

LIVING IN OBLIVION—Tom DiCillo's comedy is slight but smart, and it doesn't overstay its welcome. Steve Buscemi plays a harassed director trying to make a low-budget pic-

ANYTHING LESS WOULD BE A FIDDLE.



THE MACALLAN'S PLACE AS LEADER OF THE GREAT BAND of whiskies was roundly spelt out the other day in a learned magazine.

The writer mused on the meaning of the term 'Grande Marque', which he concluded, means simply 'Big Name' — and, he went on, 'Rolls Royce, Harrods, The Macallan and *STRADIVARIUS* are all Grande Marques in their spheres.'

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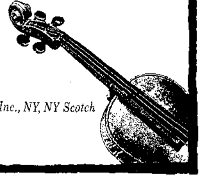
THE MACALLAN. THE SINGLE MALT SCOTCH.



Sole U.S.A. Distributor, Remy Amerique, Inc., NY, NY Scotch Whisky 86 Proof, 43% Alc./Vol. © 1995

ture in New York, who suffers a plague of glitches that range from sour milk in the crew's coffee to an angry dwarf. It's the ideal part for Buscemi: pallid, ratty, and pop-eyed, he has the air of a man who is deeply in love with movies and wishes he weren't.—A.L. (Angelika Film Center, Eastside Playhouse, and Lincoln Plaza Cinemas.)

Mortal Kombat—This martial-arts film, based on a video game and set to a techno beat, starts out promisingly: the actors look sinewy and primed for action, and the effects (mostly morphing) are convincing. But soon the movie falls flat under an uninspired good-versus-evil plot and pathetically simpleminded dialogue. To be fair, it tries for a tongue-in-cheek punch here and there; thanks to Christopher Lambert (sporting a Catherine Deneuve-like wig in the Obi-Wan Kenobi role), it lands a few. Directed by Paul Anderson.—B.D. (Village East Cinemas, Orpheum VII, and Criterion Center.)

Mute Witness—A thriller about a trio of Americans (Marina Sudina, Evan Richards, and Fay Ripley) in Moscow, one of whom—a woman who cannot speak (Sudina)—sees a murder. Written and directed by Anthony Waller. (Village East Cinemas, 19th Street East 6, First & 62nd Cinemas, East 85th Street, 84th Street Sixplex, and Embassy 1.)

Nadja—An independent feature, filmed in black and white, about a sexy vampire (Elina Löwensohn) and her twin brother (Jared Harris) in downtown Manhattan. With Peter Fonda, Martin Donovan, Galaxy Craze, and Suzy Amis. Written and directed by Michael Almereyda. (Angelika Film Center.)

No Mercy—A Peruvian version of "Crime and Punishment," set in present-day Lima. Directed by Francisco J. Lombardi. Screenplay by Augusto Cabada. In Spanish. (Film Forum; through Sept. 26.)

The Old Lady Who Walked in the Sea—Two aging con artists (Jeanne Moreau and Michel Serrault) in Guadeloupe teach their trade to a handsome young thief (Luc Thuillier), in a comedy of manners directed by Laurent Heynemann. In French. (Quad Cinema and Angelika 57.)

The Postman—Antonio Skármeta's bittersweet 1985 novel, "Burning Patience," upon which this movie is loosely based, told the story of Mario, a lonely postman who delivers mail to Pablo Neruda in Isla Negra, the desolate corner of Chile where the poet spent his final years. In Michael Radford's lovely but sanitized version, the action has been moved two decades earlier to picturesque Italy. As Neruda, the great Philippe Noiret somehow conquers being dubbed in Spanish-accented Italian; as Mario, the late Italian comedian Massimo Troisi is painfully affecting. In Italian.—S.K. (Village East Cinemas, Murray Hill Cinemas, 68th St. Playhouse, and Lincoln Plaza Cinemas.)

The Promise—Margarethe von Trotta's romantic tragedy follows two lovers (played as youths by Anian Zollner and Meret Becker and as adults by August Zirner and Corinna Harfouch) whose lives are affected by the construction and eventual collapse of the Berlin Wall. Written by the director and Peter Schneider. In German. (Quad Cinema and Lincoln Plaza Cinemas.)

The Prophecy—The forces of good, in the form of a policeman (Elias Koteas) and a schoolteacher (Virginia Madsen), battle the forces of evil (Christopher Walken and Viggo Mortenson) for the soul of a child. Written and directed by Gregory Widen. (Movieland 8th Street Triplex, Murray Hill Cinemas, Sutton, 86th Street East Twin, Chelsea Cinemas, 84th Street Sixplex, and Astor Plaza.)

Smoke—Five years ago, the director Wayne Wang asked the novelist Paul Auster to work up one of his stories as a screenplay. The result—a highly cerebral intertwining of the lives of white and black characters in Brooklyn in 1990, centering on a cigar-store owner (Harvey Keitel) and a lonely writer (William Hurt)—is obviously a labor of love. But Wang's sentimentality and Auster's self-consciousness don't go together: the direction is literal, and the lines sound like short-story dialogue read aloud. Only Forest Whitaker, playing a guilty father, comes off well. A gorgeous sequence that runs behind the final credits—with no dialogue, just a song by Tom Waits—suggests what the film *might* have been. With Harold Perrineau, Jr., Stockard Channing, and Ashley Judd.—S.K. (Angelika Film Center, Cinema 3rd Avenue, and Lincoln Plaza Cinemas.)

Opening September 22, Elizabeth Berkley in "Showgirls."

N. ASCENCIOS

The Stars Fell on Henrietta—Robert Duvall plays a broke but ambitious oilman prospecting in a small Texas town during the Depression. With Aidan Quinn, Frances Fisher, and Brian Dennehy. Directed by James Keach. (Lincoln Square.)

Theremin—An Electronic Odyssey—Steven M. Martin's documentary, about the inventor of the first electronic musical instrument, is a strange and moving piece of work. Professor Theremin's creation (played by hand movements in the air surrounding it) was put to popular use on the soundtracks of science-fiction films of the fifties; it also shows up in "Good Vibrations," the Beach Boys hit. The professor's life was full of mystery and intrigue, and the filmmakers unearth some bizarre turns of events. Much of the movie belongs to his protégée, Clara Rockmore, a theremin virtuoso; her recollections give the film its emotional weight, while theremin music enhances its spooky, somewhat hypnotic feel.—B.D. (Cinema Village; through Sept. 21.)

The Tie That Binds—Daryl Hannah and Keith Carradine play criminals out to reclaim the six-year-old daughter they have given up for adoption, in a thriller written by Michael Auerbach and directed by Wesley Strick. With Vincent Spano and Moira Kelly as the unlucky new parents. (Village East Cinemas, Murray Hill Cinemas, Sutton, 86th Street East Twin, Chelsea Cinemas, 84th Street Sixplex, and Embassy.)

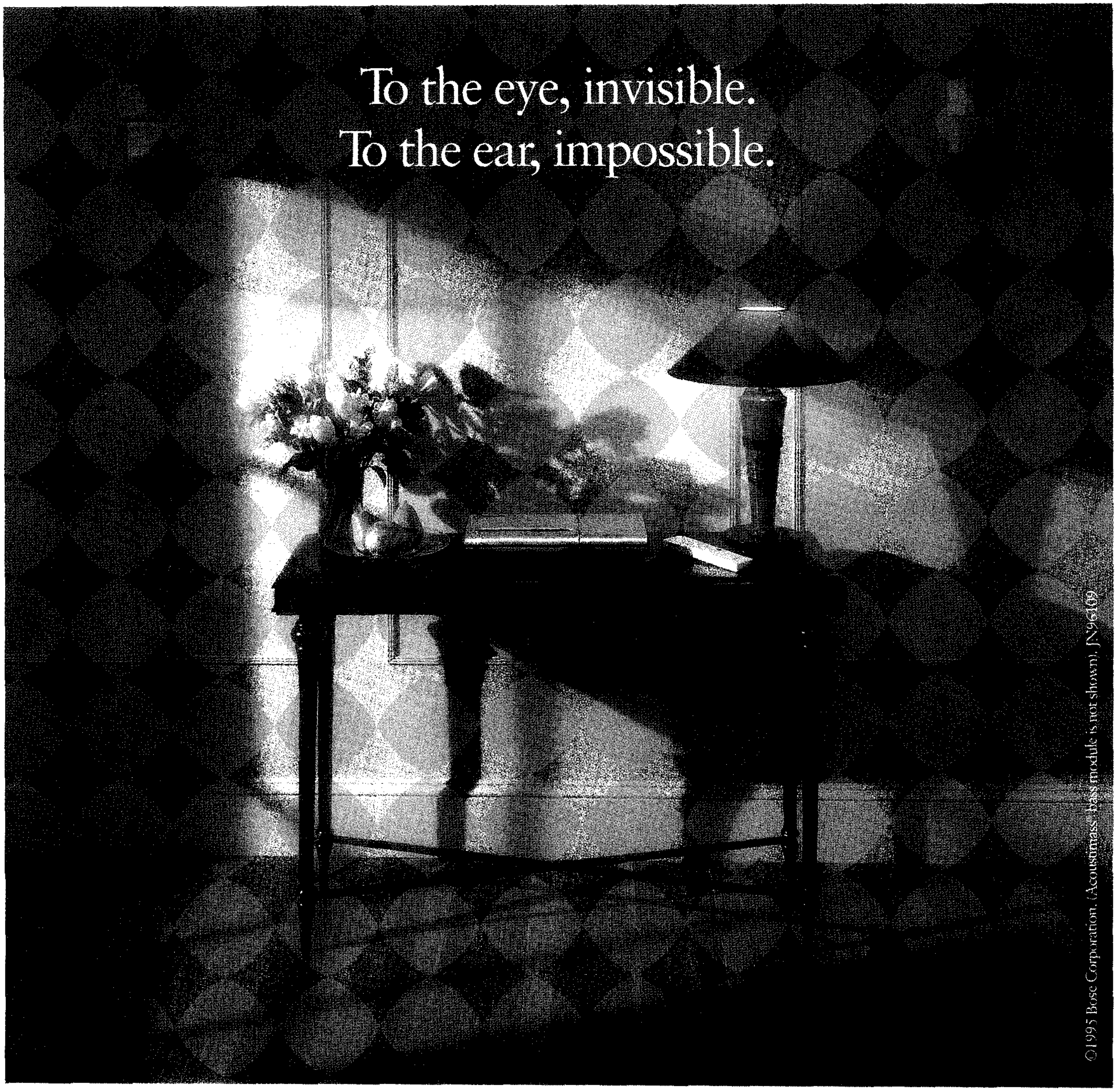
To Wong Foo, Thanks for Everything, Julie Newmar—Hollywood has long toyed with cross-dressing but hasn't dived head first into the drag scene until now. It may be a surprise to watch Patrick Swayze, Wesley Snipes, and John Leguizamo dress up in glowing silks, but it's nothing more than a surprise, and it doesn't last—the director, Beeban Kidron, has a tough time trying to mold candy floss into a dramatic shape. The bitchy threesome set off on a cross-country trip and pitch camp in a small Midwestern town, where for the rest of the movie they urge the locals to go a little wild. It's a pity that no one worked the same magic on the movie. Everything about it feels so safe, sedentary, and sexless that the leads might as well have worn gray suits. With Stockard Channing wasted as a battered wife.—A.L. (9/11/95) (34th St. East, Coronet, Orpheum VII, Art Greenwich Twin, Chelsea Cinemas, Lincoln Square, Olympia, and National Twin.)

Unstrung Heroes—In Los Angeles, in 1962, a twelve-year-old boy (Nathan Watt) runs away from his parents (Andie MacDowell and John Turturro) to live with two eccentric uncles (Michael Richards and Maury Chaykin). Diane Keaton directed, from a screenplay by Richard LaGravenese, based on Franz Lidz's 1991 memoir. (Lincoln Square. . . . ¶ Cinema I; through Sept. 21.)

Unzipped—A witty and fascinating look at the fashion designer Isaac Mizrahi during the months leading up to his fall, 1994, show. Director Douglas Keeve and editor Paula Heredia capture the absurd amount of work that goes into the twenty-minute unveiling of a collection that consists largely of pink and orange fake furs. Mizrahi—warm if occasionally dictatorial—plays to the camera like a natural star. It's nice to see a behind-the-scenes documentary that isn't just out to expose warts. With Naomi Campbell, Cindy Crawford, Kate Moss, and other very familiar faces.—S.K. (Village Theatre VII, Murray Hill Cinemas, Tower East, and Lincoln Square.)

The Usual Suspects—A treat. Five criminals, ranging from petty to pro, are herded into a police lineup on suspicion of armed robbery. They walk, but not before joining forces to plan a new crime—a bright idea that soon darkens with treachery and ends in a bulk order of dead bodies. Director Bryan Singer and screenwriter Christopher McQuarrie somehow keep from getting lost in the spiralling plot, a game in which everyone—the good, the bad, and the audience—gets to play sucker. Singer's style may overheat now and then, but his cast, headed by Chazz Palminteri and Kevin Spacey, keeps things cool.—A.L. (8/14/95) (Village Theatre VII, 19th Street East 6, New York Twin, and Lincoln Square.)

A Walk in the Clouds—Keanu Reeves plays a Second World War veteran who agrees to pose as the husband of a California vineyard owner's daughter (Aitana Sanchez-Gijon) when he learns that she is pregnant. With Giancarlo Giannini and Anthony Quinn. Directed by Alfonso Arau ("Like Water for Chocolate"). (Angelika Film Center, Beekman, 23rd St. West Triplex, and Criterion Center.)



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ALSO PLAYING

BATMAN FOREVER (reviewed in our issue of 7/10/95): Worldwide Cinemas. . . . **BELLE DE JOUR:** Village East Cinemas and Paris. . . . **CASPER:** Worldwide Cinemas. . . . **DIE HARD WITH A VENGEANCE** (5/29/95): Worldwide Cinemas. . . . **DOUBLE HAPPINESS:** Cinema 3. . . . **FIRST KNIGHT** (7/17/95): Worldwide Cinemas. . . . **FORGET PARIS** (5/29/95): Worldwide Cinemas. . . . **THE INCREDIBLY TRUE ADVENTURE OF TWO GIRLS IN LOVE:** Worldwide Cinemas. . . . **A LITTLE PRINCESS** (5/29/95): Worldwide Cinemas. . . . **LORD OF ILLUSIONS:** Criterion Center. . . . **NATIONAL LAMPOON'S SENIOR TRIP:** Movieland 8th Street Triplex, Orpheum VII, and Criterion Center. . . . **THE NET** (8/7/95): 23rd St. West Triplex and Criterion Center. . . . **I-900:** Quad Cinema. . . . **THE SHOW:** Criterion Center. . . . **SOMETHING TO TALK ABOUT:** Village Theatre VII. . . . **WATERWORLD** (8/7/95): Plaza and Criterion Center. . . . **WINGS OF COURAGE** (4/24/95): Lincoln Square.

THEATRE ADDRESSES

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EAST SIDE

Angelika Film Center, 18 W. Houston St.
Movieland 8th Street Triplex, 36 E. 8th St.
Village Theatre VII, 3rd Ave. at 11th St.
Cinema Village, 22 E. 12th St.
Village East Cinemas, 2nd Ave. at 12th St.
19th Street East 6, B'way at 19th St.
Murray Hill Cinemas, 160 E. 34th St.
34th Street Showplace, 238 E. 34th St.
34th St. East, 241 E. 34th St.
Eastside Playhouse, 3rd Ave. at 55th St.
Sutton 1 and 2, 3rd Ave. at 57th St.
Gotham Cinema, 3rd Ave. at 58th St.
Plaza, 42 E. 58th St.
Manhattan Twin, 3rd Ave. at 59th St.
59th Street East Cinema, 239 E. 59th St.
Baronet and Coronet, 3rd Ave. at 59th St.
Cinema I, Cinema II, and Cinema 3rd Avenue, 3rd Ave. at 60th St.
First & 62nd Cinemas, 400 E. 62nd St.
Gemini 1 and 2, 2nd Ave. at 64th St.
Beekman, 2nd Ave. at 66th St.
New York Twin, 2nd Ave. at 67th St.
68th St. Playhouse, 3rd Ave. at 68th St.
Tower East, 3rd Ave. at 71st St.
East 85th Street, 1st Ave. at 85th St.
Park & 86th Street Cinemas, 125 E. 86th St.
Orpheum VII, 3rd Ave. at 86th St.
86th Street East Twin, 3rd Ave. at 86th St.

WEST SIDE

Film Forum, 209 W. Houston St.
Waverly 1 and 2, 6th Ave. at 3rd St.
Art Greenwich Twin, Greenwich Ave. at 12th St.
Quad Cinema, 34 W. 13th St.
Chelsea Cinemas, 260 W. 23rd St.
23rd St. West Triplex, 333 W. 23rd St.
Guild, 33 W. 50th St.
Worldwide Cinemas, 50th St. between 8th and 9th Aves.
Ziegfeld, 141 W. 54th St.
Carnegie Hall Cinemas, 7th Ave. between 56th and 57th Sts.
Angelika 57, 225 W. 57th St.
Paris, 4 W. 58th St.
Cinema 3, 2 W. 59th St.
62nd & Broadway, 62 W. 62nd St.
Lincoln Plaza Cinemas, B'way at 63rd St.
Regency, B'way at 67th St.
Lincoln Square, B'way at 68th St.
84th Street Sixplex, B'way at 84th St.
Metro Cinema 1 and 2, B'way at 99th St.
Olympia I and II, B'way at 107th St.

TIMES SQUARE AREA

Criterion Center, B'way at 44th St.
Embassy 1, B'way at 46th St.
Embassy 2, 3, and 4, 7th Ave. at 47th St.
Astor Plaza, 44th St. at B'way.
National Twin, B'way at 44th St.

REVIVALS

(The following notes are by Pauline Kael and Michael Sragow. Theatre addresses and phone numbers appear with the listings following these notes.)

The Best Man (1964)—Gore Vidal's political melodrama is about a convention at which the two chief contestants for the party's nomination for the Presidency are an Adlai Stevenson type (Henry Fonda) and a Joe McCarthy type (Cliff Robertson). The film has a lot of verve. It has the look of crackling intelligence thanks to Haskell Wexler's black-and-white cinematography and Franklin Schaffner's sure, fast-paced direction. It seems like a hot, inside view even though Vidal sets the issues in terms of a slick, simplistic ends-and-means morality play, and throws in the kind of clever, self-congratulatory topical jokes that sound dated the first time you hear them.—P.K. (Museum of Modern Art; Sept. 22-23.)

Games (1967)—A Manhattan-set thriller, with James Caan as a cold-blooded, fortune-hunter husband, Katharine Ross as his rich, bewildered wife, and Simone Signoret as a mysterious woman in black, fond of gazing into her crystal ball. Corpses are encased in plaster to resemble sculpture by George Segal, and the ambience is meant to be chic and modern, but the story is uninvolving, the plot twists don't do as much for us as they need to, and Curtis Harrington's directing lacks pace.—P.K. (Film Forum 2; Sept. 24-25.)

Idiot's Delight (1939)—This M-G-M version of Robert Sherwood's allegorical comedy has Clark Gable as a hoofer and Norma Shearer as a fake Russian countess (the roles made famous on Broadway by Lunt and Fontanne). It's set in an Alpine winter-sports hotel high above a world about to be engulfed in war. The characters include a leftist, a pair of honeymooners, and so forth; and there's got to be an antiwar message in it somewhere. Gable isn't bad (he does a deliberately clunky, bedraggled dance to "Puttin' On the Ritz"), but oh, that Shearer. Directed by Clarence Brown, who struggles hopelessly trying to give this stagey material some style and impudence. Sherwood did the adaptation himself, providing a new, upbeat ending.—P.K. (Museum of Modern Art; Sept. 22 and 24.)

School Daze (1988)—The performers play to the crowd and the plot serves as a clothesline for chic topics in Spike Lee's musical extravaganza about friction on a Southern black-college campus. The movie is "Animal House" with a political overlay; instead of nerds, slobs, and preppies, we get Jigaboos (politically conscious, natural-haired, and dark-skinned), Wannabees (party conscious, straight-haired, and light-skinned), and Da Fellas (a militant Jigaboo subcult). Lee's screenplay operates like a cluster bomb—when the arguments come flying helter-skelter, you want to duck and cover—and his direction is all over the place. Larry Fishburne struggles with the script's ringing declarations; that old vet Ossie Davis pulls off a funny bit as a frantic, preacherlike football coach. Featuring Giancarlo Esposito, Tisha Campbell, and Lee himself as a frat pledge named Half-Pint.—M.S. (American Museum of the Moving Image; Sept. 23.)

Singin' in the Rain (1952)—This exuberant satire of Hollywood in the late twenties, at the time of the transition from silents to talkies, is probably the most enjoyable of all American movie musicals. The teamwork of the stars, Gene Kelly, Donald O'Connor, and Debbie Reynolds, is joyful, and the material is first-rate—ranging from parodies of the Busby Berkeley style of choreography to the Charleston and the black bottom performed straight. The film falters during a too-long love song on a deserted studio stage (later cut from some of the prints) and during a lavish oversize Broadway ballet, but these sequences don't seriously affect one's enjoyment. With Jean Hagen as an imbecile movie queen. Directed by Kelly and

Stanley Donen from the witty, affectionate script by Betty Comden and Adolph Green.—P.K. (Symphony Space; Sept. 26.)

You Can't Cheat an Honest Man (1939)—W. C. Fields's megadoses of misanthropy can't energize this ramble about a seedy circus owner (Fields) who feuds with the law and with the ventriloquist's dummy Charlie McCarthy. When speaking for Charlie, Edgar Bergen moves his lips shamelessly, as one presumes he did when he performed with Fields on radio. Even as a tacky revue, the movie is caught between the heartless and the heartwarming—it pivots on the devotion of the circus owner's daughter (Constance Moore) to both her father and the (not so) Great Edgar. George Marshall gets the director's credit, though Edward Cline shot Fields's scenes.—M.S. (Walter Reade Theatre; Sept. 23-24.)

At the Walter Reade Theatre, Assumpta Serna in "I, the Worst of All."

DEBRA ROSS

LATE RUNS, CLASSICS, ETC.

(Titles with a dagger are reviewed above.)

Film Forum 2, 209 W. Houston St. (727-8110)—Sept. 20: "Night Digger" (1971, Alastair Reid), with Patricia Neal, and "Eye of the Devil" (1967, J. Lee Thompson), with Deborah Kerr and David Niven. . . . ¶ Sept. 21: "Whoever Slew Auntie Roo?" (1971, Curtis Harrington), with Shelley Winters and Mark Lester, and "What's the Matter with Helen?" (1971, Harrington), with Debbie Reynolds, Winters, and Dennis Weaver. . . . ¶ Sept. 22: "Bloody Mama" (1970, Roger Corman), with Winters, Don Stroud, and Pat Hingle, and "Serial Mom" (1994, John Waters), with Kathleen Turner. . . . ¶ Sept. 23: "The Bad Seed" (1956, Mervyn LeRoy), with Nancy Kelly and Patty McCormack, and "The Little Girl Who Lives Down the Lane" (1976, Nicolas Gessner), with Jodie Foster, Martin Sheen, and Scott Jacoby. . . . ¶ Sept. 24-25: "Diabolique" (1955, Henri-Georges Clouzot; in French), with Simone Signoret, Vera Clouzot, and Paul Meurisse, and "Games" (†). . . . ¶ Sept. 26: Politically incorrect cartoons from the thirties, forties, and fifties that might offend everyone.

Museum of Modern Art, Roy and Niuta Titus Theatres, 11 W. 53rd St. (708-9480)—A series of films made from Broadway plays. Sept. 21 at 2:30: "Once in a Lifetime" (1932, Russell Mack), with Jack Oakie, Sidney Fox, and Aline MacMahon. . . . Sept. 21 at 6 and Sept. 23 at 3: "Toys in the Attic" (1963, George Roy Hill), with Geraldine Page, Wendy Hiller, and Dean Martin. . . . Sept. 22 at 2:30 and Sept. 24 at 1: "The Man Who Reclaimed His Head" (1934, Edward Ludwig), with Claude Rains, Lionel Atwill, and Joan Bennett. . . . Sept. 22 at 6 and Sept. 23 at 1: "The Best Man" (†). . . . Sept. 22 at 8 and Sept. 24 at 2:45: "Idiot's Delight" (†). . . . Sept. 23 at 5 and Sept. 26 at 2:30: "Inherit the Wind" (1960, Stanley Kramer), with Fredric March and Spencer Tracy. . . . Sept. 24 at 5: "A Streetcar Named Desire" (1951, Elia Kazan), with Vivien Leigh, Marlon Brando, Karl Malden, and Kim Hunter. . . . Sept. 25 at 2:30: "Witness for the Prosecution" (1958, Billy Wilder), with Tyrone Power, Marlene Dietrich, Charles Laughton, Elsa Lanchester, and Una O'Connor. . . . Sept. 25 at 6: "A View from the Bridge" (1962, Sidney Lumet), with Raf Vallone, Maureen Stapleton, and Carol Lawrence. . . . Sept. 26 at 6: "A Raisin in the Sun" (1961, Donald Petrie), with Sidney Poitier, Claudia McNeil, and Ruby Dee. . . . ¶ Sept. 22 at 3, 6, and 8:30; Sept. 23-24 at 2:30 and 5; and Sept. 25-26 at 3 and 6: A series of short and medium-length films made between 1911 and 1919 in Wilhelmine, Germany. All are silent, with German intertitles; English synopses will be provided.

Walter Reade Theatre, Lincoln Center, 165 W. 65th St., plaza level (875-5600)—A program of films from Argentina; all the films are in Spanish, with English subtitles. Sept. 20 at 2 and 4: "Cortazar" (1994, Tristan Bauer). . . . Sept. 21 at 2 and 6:15: "Time for Revenge" (1981, Adolfo Aristarain). . . . Sept. 21 at 4:15 and 8:30: "Where Are You, Love of My Life, That I Can't Find You?" (1992, Juan José Jusid). . . . Sept. 22 at 2, 4, 6, 8, and 10; Sept. 23 at 6:30 and 8:30; Sept. 24 at 4 and 6; and Sept. 25-26 at 8: "I, the Worst of All" (1990, Maria Luisa Bemberg). . . . Sept. 23 at 4 and Sept. 24 at 8: "Tangos, the Exile of Gardel" (1985, Fernando Solanas). . . . Sept. 25 at 6: "I Don't Want to Talk About It" (1993, Bemberg). . . . Sept. 26 at 6: "Camila" (1984, Bemberg). . . . ¶ Weekend showings for children. Sept. 23-24 at 2: "You Can't Cheat an Honest Man" (†).

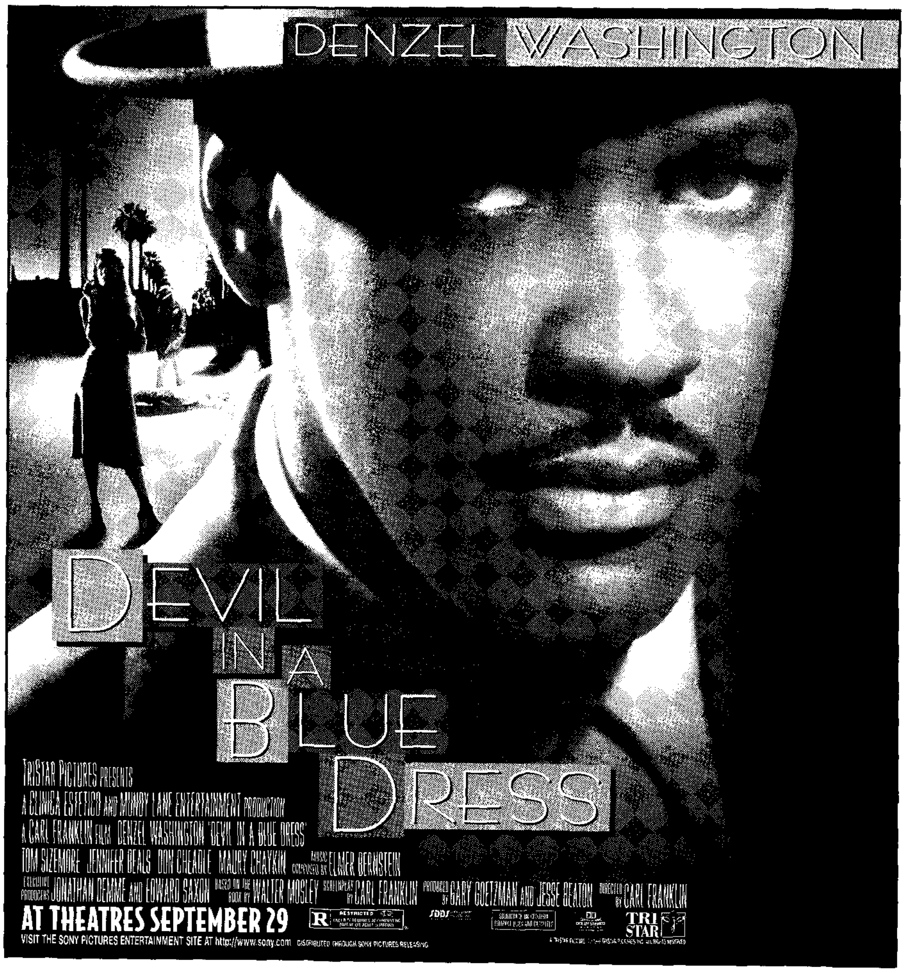
Museum of Television and Radio, 25 W. 52nd St. (621-6800)—James Dean's television appearances. From Sept. 22: "A Long Time Till Dawn" (1953).

American Museum of the Moving Image, 35th Ave. at 36th St., Astoria (1-718 784-0077)—Films directed by Spike Lee. Sept. 23 at 2: "School Daze" (†). . . . Sept. 23 at 5: "Mo' Better Blues" (1990), with Denzel Washington, Lee, Wesley Snipes, and Giancarlo Esposito. . . . Sept. 24 at 2: "She's Gotta Have It" (1986), with Tracy Camila Johns, Tommy Redmond Hicks, John Canada Terrell, and Lee. . . . Sept. 24 at 4:30: "Making 'Do the Right Thing' " (1989, St. Clair Bourne), a documentary.

A Different Light Bookstore, 151 W. 19th St. (989-4850)—A Sunday-night series of free films (and popcorn). On Sept. 24 at 7, the feature will be "The Scarlet Empress" (1934, Josef von Sternberg), with Marlene Dietrich.

Anthology Film Archives, 32 Second Ave., at 2nd St. (505-5181)—Sept. 20 at 8, Sept. 21 at 7, Sept. 22 at 8, Sept. 23 at 9:30, Sept. 24 at 10, and Sept. 25-26 at 8: "The Blue Villa" (1995, Alain Robbe-Grillet and Dimitri de Clercq; in French). . . . ¶ Sept. 21 at 9: "Breathless" (1959, Jean-Luc Godard; in French), with Jean Seberg and Jean-Paul Belmondo. . . . ¶ Sept. 22 at 8:30 and Sept. 23 at 6: Two programs from the Third ICA Biennial of Independent Film and Video. . . . ¶ Sept. 23 at 8: Three short French films by Jean Vigo. . . . ¶ Sept. 23 at 10: "The Brig" (1964, Jonas Mekas). . . . ¶ Sept. 24 at 7: "Carriage Trade" (1972, Warren Sonbert). . . . ¶ Sept. 24 at 8: "L'Atalante" (1934, Vigo; in French).

Symphony Space, B'way at 95th St. (864-5400)—Sept. 26 at 7: "Singin' in the Rain" (†). . . . ¶ Sept. 26 at 9: "8½" (1963, Federico Fellini; in Italian), with Marcello Mastroianni.



DENZEL WASHINGTON
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EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS JONATHAN DEMME AND EDWARD SAXON BASED ON THE BOOK BY WALTER MOSLEY SCREENPLAY BY CARL FRANKLIN PRODUCED BY GARY GOETZMAN AND JESSE BEATON DIRECTED BY CARL FRANKLIN
AT THEATRES SEPTEMBER 29
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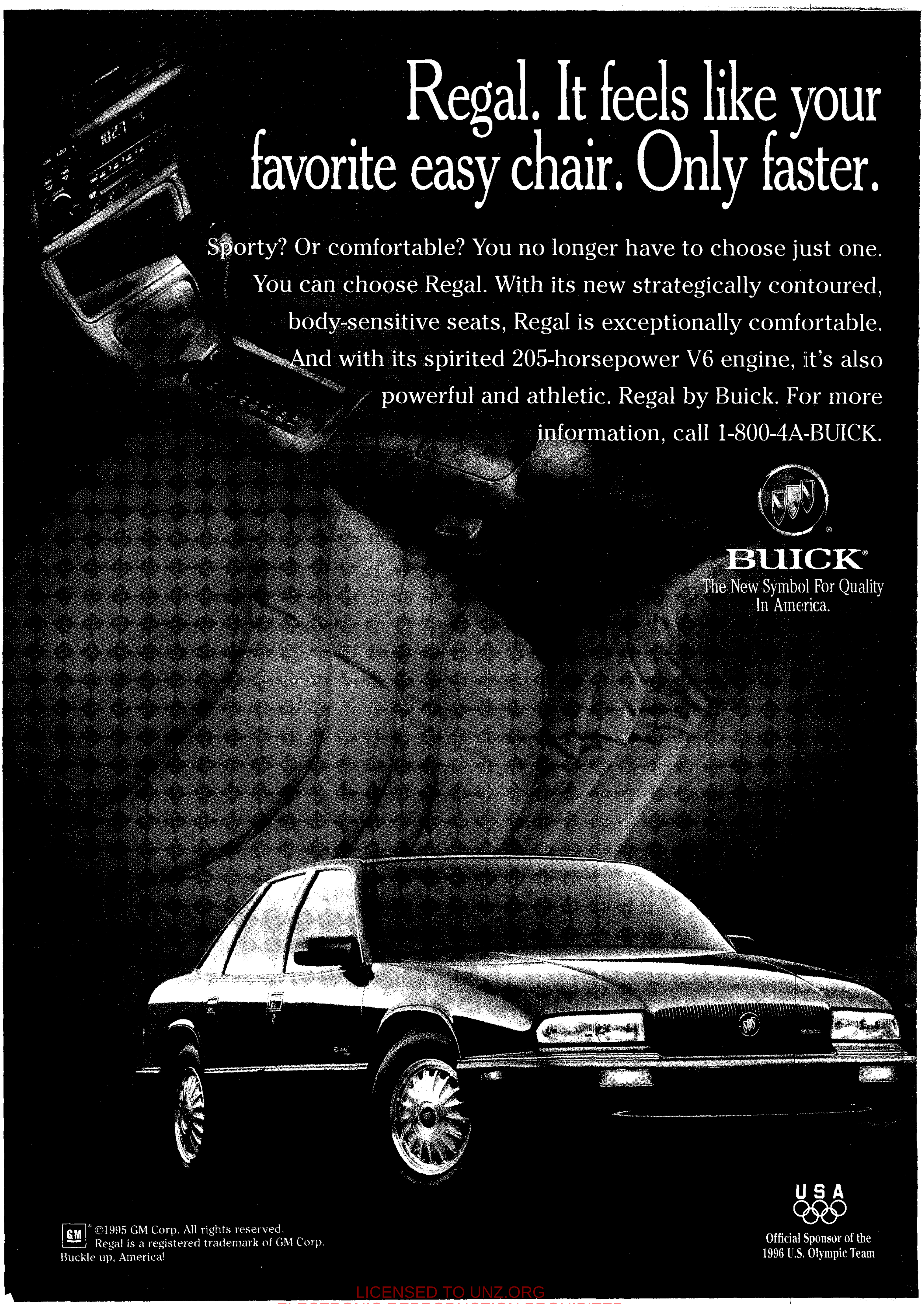

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THE NEW YORKER

THE TALK OF THE TOWN

PHOTO OPPORTUNISM

John Kennedy

Even the corporate higher-ups at the new magazine *George* are growing accustomed to working in the shadow of the editor-in-chief, John Kennedy. But not until a recent Thursday afternoon did David Pecker, the C.E.O. of its parent company, Hachette Filipacchi Magazines, and Michael Berman, *George's* executive publisher, learn that, in the presence of Kennedy's glistening aura, their identities were in danger of being completely erased.

In preparing an article on the magazine's launch, the Washington *Post* had requested an interview with Kennedy but was told that Berman and Pecker would have to be included. When the *Post* requested a photo shoot with Kennedy alone, word came back that the photograph, like the interview, was a package deal.

Martha Sherrill, a writer for the newspaper's Style section, exacted her revenge by casting her article as a profile of Kennedy anyway, referring to Berman and Pecker as "indistinct blurs." After the photograph of the trio came across the *Post's* electronic network to the editorial desk, the temptation was too much for the Style section's art director, who, with a few quick clicks of a mouse and a gyration or two of the wrist, blurred the faces of Berman and Pecker. What was left was Kennedy's sparkling and lucid mug, flanked by his colleagues' ethereal, unfocussed remnants. The paper's first edition went to press.

A *Post* photo editor quickly condemned the blurring and requested that all subsequent editions of Thursday's paper carry the original, unaltered portrait. So even before the angry call from *George's* publicist ("David Pecker is not an indistinct blur!"), before the reprimand from *Post* executive editor Leonard Downie, Jr., and before the *Post's* distribution of a pointed "No blurring" E-mail, Berman and Pecker were back in focus—their likenesses, if not their egos, fully reconstituted.

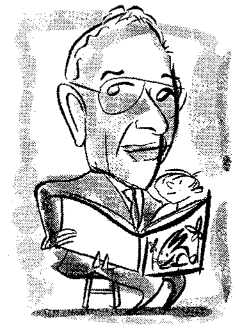
ILLUSTRATIONS BY TOM BACHTELL

DOES DICK SNYDER FINALLY GET IT?

Richard Snyder, the former chairman, C.E.O., and warrior-king of Simon & Schuster, has been smelling the roses. He has found, to his surprise, that he likes smelling roses, and he plans to incorporate this newfound sensitivity into his famously abrasive personality. But Snyder has left the pasture. Earlier this month, a year and a half after Viacom bought Paramount, Simon & Schuster's parent company, and Snyder endured one of the most humiliating firings since Truman disposed of MacArthur, he returned to the field with the purchase, for a hundred and thirty-five million dollars, of a controlling interest in Western Publishing, the owner of the evergreen children's line Golden Books.

It is, to be sure, a modest return. Snyder now operates from a small office in the headquarters of his partner in the Western deal, Warburg, Pincus Ventures—two shelves of books, a ficus tree in the corner, pictures on the desk of his third wife and their two-year-old son. But Snyder considers his scant acreage quite sufficient at present. He feels like a man who fell through a trapdoor and then slowly crawled back up. Simon & Schuster was Snyder's whole life, and he lost it without warning. "It's like what an automobile accident must be, or a sudden death," says Snyder, who, at sixty-two, has rigorously cropped white hair and a ruddy complexion. "Your life is changed in an instant."

Snyder credits his wife and son with restoring his peace of mind. He also devised a regime of nature therapy to drain off his unspent aggression. Almost every day, Snyder, along with a man he had hired, went out into some sixty acres of forest on his estate north of Bedford to clear land and build ponds. "Planting gardens and saving trees," says Snyder, sipping from a cup of water. "It all sounds corny, but that's life-giving. And that's where I started to heal, corny as it sounds." Apparently, Snyder, who knows the value of a reputation for toughness, fears that his new touchy-feely vocabulary might make him seem faintly ridiculous. Nevertheless, tossing caution to the wind, he adds, "You learn to realize that alternative life styles are not as crazy as they sound, or as vapid"—even if by "alternative life styles" he appears to mean spending less time at the office and more at home.


Richard Snyder

After a three- or four-month period of "intensive healing," Snyder says, he put together a "fully financed bid" to buy back Simon & Schuster, but Viacom was not interested. He then turned his sights on Western, the publisher of such hardy perennials as "Pat the Bunny" and "The Poky Little Puppy." Golden Books had once been published jointly by Western and Simon & Schuster, and Snyder had begun his career there in 1961 as the assistant to Golden's sales manager. He says he realized that an invaluable brand name was being "underpublished" and undermanaged—something like Disney in the days before Michael Eisner. Snyder says he plans to use his new company as "a base for further expansion," within children's books and possibly far beyond.

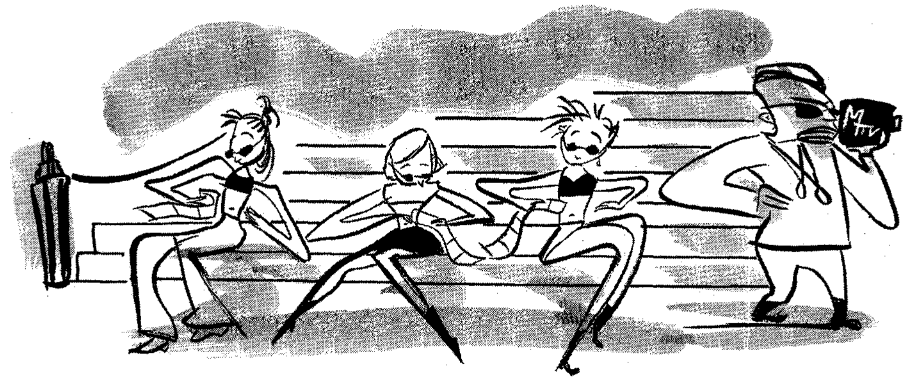
Maybe it's those healing northern Westchester swamps, but today Snyder does not much resemble the monster of repute. He laughs easily, he makes small talk, and he calls his little boy Munchkin without apologizing for being corny. On the other hand, he has not forgotten the past. Snyder was fired, or so Viacom officials said at the time, for being an unbridled bully in a company that values consensus. Soon afterward, the *Wall Street Journal* ran an extensive profile describing Snyder as "despotic" and quoting employees' accounts of his epic temper tantrums and his imperial style. The opening line of the story was "Richard Snyder still doesn't get it." Asked if, with his new sense of perspective and serenity, he now got it, Snyder sat up in his chair, stiffened noticeably, and delivered an angry attack on the article and one of its two authors.

Snyder acknowledges the obvious by saying, "It is still very painful to me." Speaking slowly and deliberately, he goes on, "What was built was the world's greatest publishing company in *every* aspect. And when you build something, you have to make decisions that may be contrary to people's desires. And if you make them honestly, I've never had a problem with that." It was others, of course, who had the problem. Asked if the employees of Western Publishing could expect a milder Dick Snyder, he sat back in his chair, relaxed slightly, and said, "There were things that were probably done at twenty-seven that you wouldn't do at forty-eight. You grow. Things change, life changes, one hopefully grows up."

MTV'S DISCIPLES

While much of the recent criticism of MTV has adopted the same line of attack—namely, that it represents the worst aspects of popular culture, which has resulted in a cheap but addictive boob-tube high for a nation of TV-and-Kool-Aid-guzzling kids with glazed eyes who have entrusted their collective soul to MTV's faceless, devil-worshipping, head-banging Big Brother programming department—little is made of MTV as an agent of good. Well, the other night, at the twelfth-annual MTV Video Music Awards show, at Radio City Music Hall, it became clear that MTV has the power to evoke God.

"I want to thank God for letting us still be living and being in the business," said the blond member of the girl funk group TLC after winning the Viewer's Choice Award for "Waterfalls." This was just after Courtney Love, the lipstick-and-tragedy-smeared lead singer and guitarist for the rock group Hole, intoned, "God bless you, God bless you," at the end of *her* song, "Violet," which she dedicated to her late husband, Kurt Cobain, and to a number of other music-world martyrs.



God was also on the mind of the former MTV v.j. Downtown Julie Brown, who was seen hanging around Radio City's carpeted, Roman Forum-like lobby. "God bless MTV," she said. "They took my first three children, and I'm sure they gave the kids good homes, and they'll be rock stars one day. But I'm glad I got out after my fifth year." Also on Brown's mind was the possibility that her ur-chic downtown ensemble—white platform sneakers, white bell-bottoms, black bra—was not considered so by *Vanity Fair's* fashion director, Elizabeth Saltzman, or by the former porn star Traci Lords, who together circled Brown like lions around a lone Christian. Brown tried to ignore them. She turned her attention—briefly—to Tommy Boy Music's president, Monica Lynch, who wore a bright-colored silk shirt that Lynch described as "Versace by way of the Verrazano Bridge." Next, Brown turned her attention—briefly—to a group of young women who sat on the lobby's carpeted stairs, mopping their perspiring midsections with toilet paper.

Dante's Purgatory bore no physical resemblance to the pressrooms MTV had set up in the basement, below the cranes, aerial cameras, aimless throngs, and flickering television screens that choked the lobby. In the pressrooms, there were a number of plastic folding chairs and a small stage with microphones from which winners and losers alike could hold forth to the press. "Do you want Seal, anybody? Anybody want Seal?" asked an MTV dignitary whose responsibility it was to incite interest in anyone MTV could offer. In fact, very few stars came down to the room where most of the journalists were assembled. Feeling slighted, they affected apathy when they were offered anyone they considered "minor."

"How about Tim Robbins? How's it for Tim?" The MTV dignitary drew blank stares from nearly everyone, and he turned away and pursued his frantic efforts to force-feed his celebrity-bread to other minions.

A DICKENSIAN TASK

Many people fear that our ever-increasing dependence on computers will have an adverse effect on traditional intellectual pursuits, but among much evidence to the contrary is the forthcoming publication of a three-volume work of literary scholarship entitled "Everyone in Dickens," which would have been impossible to accomplish in a single lifetime without the aid of a computer. In this work, published by Greenwood Press with a list price of two hundred and seventy-five dollars, a sixty-four-year-old white-bearded pianist-singer-soldier-lawyer-banker-bibliophile named George Newlin lists thirteen thousand one hundred and forty-three names of characters, fictional and nonfictional, that appear somewhere in the vast Charles Dickens œuvre, whether in his novels, magazine articles, speeches, plays, poetry, or collaborations. Twelve separate indexes identify characters by name, family relationships, and occupation, and also give a one-line description that leads elsewhere in the text to more lengthy descriptions of them in Dickens's own words. And if, as a Dickens addict, you recall a favorite beadle or undertaker who happens not to have achieved the dignity of a name, Newlin has listed over four thousand of these humble folk according to their occupations. He also finds room in his twenty-five hundred and sixty-eight pages to deal with topics like "Major Characters' Names Used Only Once," "Striking Omissions in Characters' Given Names," and "Pet and Other Animal Names."

It was Newlin's trusty computer that enabled him to organize the immense mass of Dickens material, searching out a word with the tap of a single key, shifting thousands of words in bulk from one place to another with another tap, and so by electronic manipulation avoiding the repetitious donkeywork imposed on scholars in earlier times. He undertook the task as a consequence of becoming obsessed with Dickens seven years ago, when the break-up of his marriage prompted him to seek emotional refuge in his library. Among the books he turned to was "The Old Curiosity Shop," and he found it a far better novel than he had remembered. Armed with blocks of yellow and blue Post-its, he kept marking passages that he might one day wish to return to. Before he knew it, he had launched himself on a new career. Having already taken care to accumulate what he calls "an adequate cushion" in the world of finance, he set out, as an amateur scholar, to devote himself to a project that many Dickens academic scholars had dreamed of but had assumed to be unthinkably difficult.

Specifically, what made it possible for Newlin to complete the task in six years was his now archaic Macintosh SE and an equally archaic ink-jet printer. "Every word, every punctuation mark was typed by me," he says. "I've been a concert pianist, and probably for that reason I became a rapid typist and often had to wait for my screen to show me what I'd already written. Today I am in a position to take advantage of a laser printer, and can work much faster than I used to."

Which is Newlin's way of hinting that the Dickens obsession has not yet run its course, and that the publication of a fourth volume, which Newlin tentatively calls "A Dickens Topicon," can be looked for within a year or so. The "Topicon"—the title is a Newlin neologism—will be a thematic concordance dealing with every aspect of life that Dickens happened to note and set down *except* people: places, social conditions, inventions, and the like. Once that task has been accomplished, other authors in need of Newlinian analysis hover invitingly on the horizon. Backed by the latest resources of computerization, Newlin contemplates taking on Thackeray, Trollope, and George Eliot. He flexes his fingers over an imaginary keyboard and exclaims, "I can hardly wait."

HOW THEY MOVED TWENTY BILLION IN BULLION

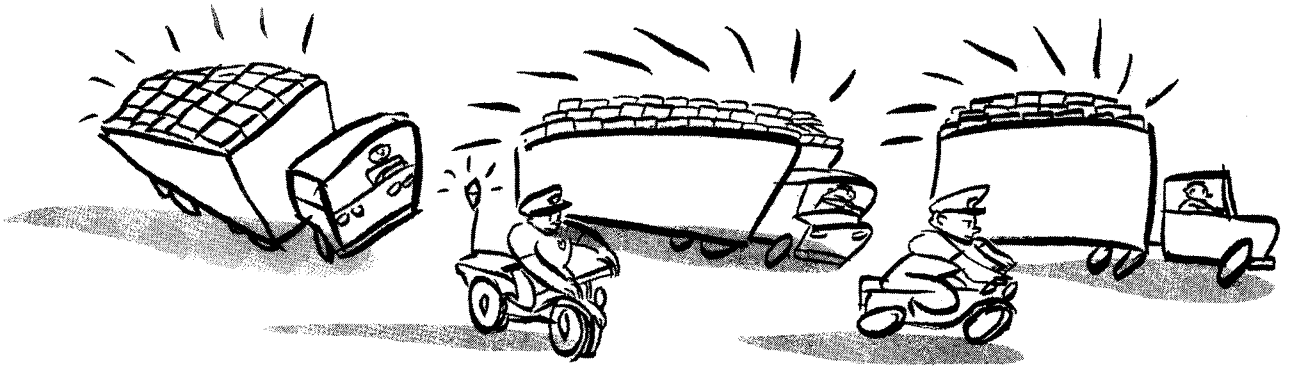
DR. WILLIAM F. DADDIO is an energetic man of forty-eight who drives a bright-red M.G., is bald on top, and has a throaty laugh that reminds one of Danny DeVito. He grew up in Woodbridge, New Jersey, and earned a Ph.D. in sociology and anthropology from Notre Dame, then somehow ended up, in 1980, as head of security for the United States Mint, a position he still holds. The other day, Dr. Daddio (pronounced "Daddy-O"), breaking more than thirteen years of silence, agreed to recount a previously undisclosed piece of New York City history.

During a ten-month period beginning in late 1981, it was Daddio's job to oversee the secret removal of a vast supply of gold bullion that had been stored by the Mint at a site near Wall Street and to have it transported by tractor-trailer through the streets and tunnels of Manhattan to another depository, at West Point. Some twenty billion dollars in gold—about a quarter of the Treasury's stockpile—passed under the noses of hundreds of thousands of New Yorkers, and no one, apparently, suspected a thing.

THE United States hoards its gold in three locations: Fort Knox, Kentucky; Denver, Colorado; and West Point. Until Daddio's operation, there was a fourth—the United States Assay Office at 32 Old Slip, on the East River, which held about fifty-eight million ounces of gold. (Another large cache, belonging to many nations, is ensconced at the Federal Reserve Bank on Liberty Street; that gold was stolen in the recent movie "Die Hard with a Vengeance.")

Daddio recalled that the first time he saw the Assay Office, in 1980, he'd said, "Oh, man, you're kidding me." The building, erected in 1930, seemed a terrible security risk: unlike the other depositories, it couldn't be surrounded with an armed encampment and a fence. Fortunately, when Donald T. Regan, a Wall Street veteran, became Treasury Secretary in 1981, he, too, voiced concern about the Assay Office, and Daddio easily obtained approval from Regan to close it down.

There was no guidebook, however, for transporting twenty billion in bullion through a crowded metropolis, and Daddio had to choose between two distinctly different strategies. Plan A was to move the gold as stealthily as possible in unmarked trucks that would merge with the downtown traffic. Plan B was to escort the trucks using a small army of law-



enforcement people—among them state and city police and members of the Secret Service, all equipped with flak vests, gas masks, and automatic weapons—and let people try to guess at the cargo. Daddio picked Plan B, and the best guess he heard, over truck drivers' C.B. radios, was nuclear waste.

Emptying the Assay Office of its gold took twenty-five trips. At around 1 P.M. each day, Daddio supervised the stacking of the day's shipment of bullion onto pallets. By three, Mint employees began loading the pallets onto five huge trucks, which had armored cabs with bulletproof windows. Each truck carried between forty and fifty thousand pounds of bullion. A sixth was left empty, to be used in case of a breakdown.

By 7 P.M., the trucks were ready to roll, with Daddio driving near the front in a rented Firebird. The convoy proceeded down to the Battery, then headed up the West Side Highway and took either the Holland or the Lincoln Tunnel, both of which had been temporarily closed to traffic. Daddio still marvels at how well all the different agencies and police units worked together. The only noncoöperator, he said, was the New Jersey Highway Authority: it insisted that all the vehicles stop and pay the toll. "You're gonna have to bill us, because we're not stopping," Daddio told the Authority.

DADDIO said that during the whole operation he never feared a robbery attempt. His main anxiety was that an accident would leave gold bars all over the road. About the only close call came when the driver of the lead car took a left fork instead of a right, and nearly a billion dollars in gold was heading in the wrong direction. Daddio radioed his administrative assistant, Joe Horton, who was in the lead truck. "I said, 'Joe, can these trucks jump the curb?' " Daddio recalled. "He says, 'Jump the curb? O.K.' Suddenly, there goes the whole convoy over the barrier. I see sparks. One car lost a muffler."

When the last of the gold had been moved to West Point, Daddio invited all the cops and agents to celebrate at an Irish bar and restaurant in downtown Manhattan. He estimated that there were a hundred and eighty cops and agents present, and he expressed amazement that so many people had kept the details of the gold transfer secret for so long. One of the celebrators was amazed by something else. "This is the first party full of cops that I've ever been to where there wasn't a brawl," he told Daddio.

A STAR AMONG STARS

Alba Parietti

"*LIMONATA?*" inquires an aging manservant as he ladles a pale-green liquid into Venetian tumblers. Lemonade with the sharp bite of vodka and cut limes is a specialty of the house. This is one of the last days of the Venice Film Festival, and Count Giovanni Volpi is holding a luncheon in the garden of his villa, Ca' Leone. On the patio, overlooking the grape arbors, the fig trees, and the hazy blue skies of the Lagoon of Venice, close to two hundred guests sip the lethal potion. Contessa Marie Brandolini, Contessa Marina Cicogna, Marchese José Luis Villalonga, and the German director Margarethe Von Trotta are introduced as the Hollywood contingent arrives.

Jack Nicholson is applauded for his performance in Sean Penn's "The Crossing Guard," and, for perhaps the fiftieth time in the last two days, he bows graciously, flashing his wickedly seductive smile. "A class act," Harvey Weinstein, of Miramax, announces. The guests also salute Mel Gibson for "Braveheart," and Chazz Palminteri, Sean Penn, and William Friedkin, but most of the attention is focussed on Alba Parietti, the Italian TV bombshell. A great Valkyrie woman of astonishing proportions, Parietti, in white patent-leather stilettos, stands almost six feet tall. The curves are Rubenesque; the tight blue-checked miniskirt, Vegas.

"She is a sensation," the Count says. "And the interesting thing is, she's extremely smart. Really very intelligent." Parietti has been called the Barbara Walters of Italy. She became famous as the host of a sports show and now does talk-show specials, interviewing celebrities and politicians. "Italian men worship her," the Count confides.

Aware of this power, Parietti sits, legs alluringly crossed, and toys with the langoustines and pasta. Then, gold compact in hand, she powders her already heavily powdered nose. "Unfortunately," the Count says, "I think she was much prettier before she had the fish mouth done." The nose finished, Alba applies a fresh coat of sienna-brown lipstick to her mouth, which, if not exactly fish-like, is preternaturally luscious and oversized, as are her breasts.

"Incredible," an American agent whispers.

"Rumor has it that she once ate an ice-cream cone at a football match," says Catherine Fairweather, who works for Vatican Radio in Rome. "The entire stadium applauded when she finished it. Of course, in England or America, no one who looked like that could ever be employed for anything serious on TV."

"Italian men feel more comfortable with beautiful women," a distinguished but rather liverish-eyed Englishman says. "Whereas we English feel really comfortable only with the plain ones."

Parietti's velvety, kohl-rimmed eyes are now studying a box of cold medicine. Apparently, she is a little under the weather. Gibson, sitting opposite, politely inquires about her health. The goddess smiles, shrugs, and tosses her blond-streaked hair. Alas, she does not speak English.

"Extremely well rounded," Gibson murmurs, just as a man attempts to whisper in his ear. Would he please stand and smile for the ladies at the far table?

Ever ready to oblige, Gibson does just that. The ladies wave back and applaud.

Meanwhile, *limonata* has been spilled on Nicholson's jacket. He gets up to shake it off, and, spontaneously, the guests clap.

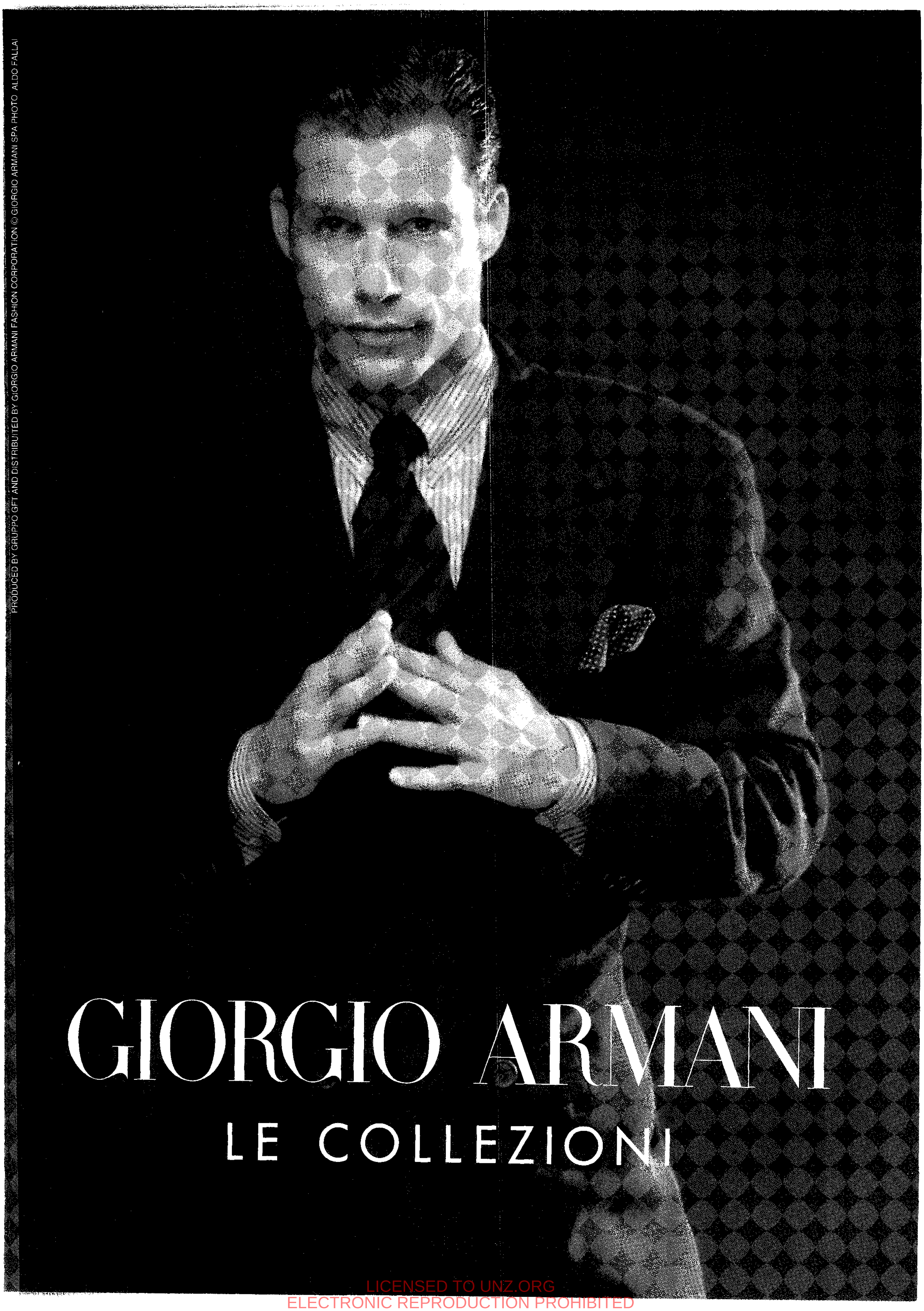
"Class," Harvey Weinstein says.

A cool afternoon breeze wafts in from the lagoon, and the sky is now a silvery gray. Parietti is talking on her cellular, ready to leave. She has a TV show to do tonight, and her boat is waiting. Her white high heels tap, tap across the weathered flagstones. Still talking, she turns, laughs, and waves at the remaining guests.

"*Ciao!*"

"*Ciao, bella!*" ♦

"Photo Opportunism," Warren St. John; "Does Dick Snyder Finally Get It?," James Traub; "MTV's Disciples," Hilton Als; "A Dickensian Task," Brendan Gill; "How They Moved Twenty Billion in Bullion," Ira Silverman and Fredric Dannen; "A Star Among Stars," Fiona Lewis.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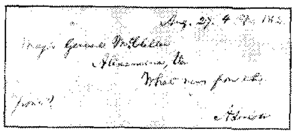

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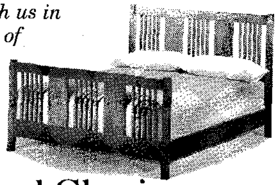

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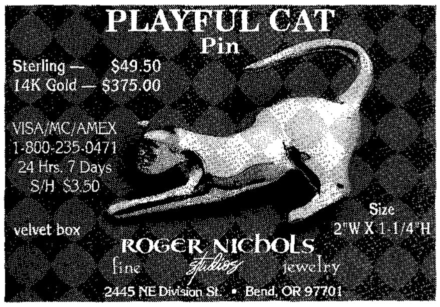

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LETTER FROM MEXICO

WHODUNNIT?

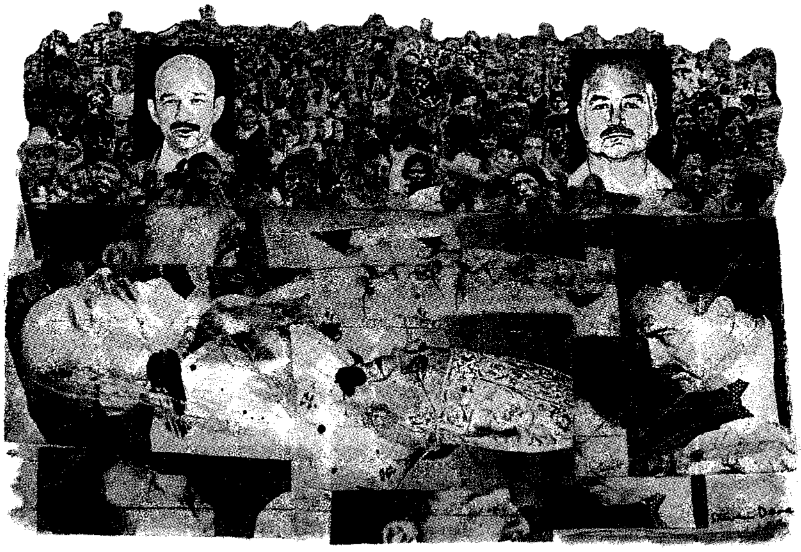
Will the government's inability, or unwillingness, to solve three murders finally bring the old system down?

BY ALMA GUILLERMOPRIETO

On May 24, 1993, as Juan Jesús Cardinal Posadas, the Archbishop of Guadalajara, was about to get out of his car at the crowded entrance to the Guadalajara airport, gunmen forced open the door and shot him point-blank. The reasons for the Cardinal's death remain in doubt in the public mind, but it is accepted that the men who killed him were in the pay of a swiftly emerging drug élite. In March of last year, Luis Donaldo Colosio, the Presidential candidate of the Partido Revolucionario Institucional, or PRI—the party that has been in power in Mexico for most of the century—was assassinated in Tijuana. President Carlos Salinas de Gortari appointed Ernesto Zedillo, Colosio's campaign manager, as his unlikely successor. Zedillo was duly elected in August, and the system prepared to move on. But a month later there was yet another assassination—this time, it was the secretary-general of the PRI, José Francisco Ruiz Massieu—and the realization dawned here that crime might be the new form that politics was taking in this unpredictable era.

The murders, dreadful in and of themselves, are terrifying mainly because they remain unsolved and, as such, are clear evidence not only that the country is falling apart but that there is no one who can put the old order back together again. Not since the aftermath of the 1910 revolution, commentators and opposition politicians keep pointing out, has Mexico lived through comparable times. There is a raging economic crisis, the traffic of illegal drugs has put significant power in the hands of outlaws, and the PRI's one-party rule is disintegrating, but the emotional center of the unhappiness and unease that seem to have invaded so many aspects of public and private life in Mexico remains the bloodshed that destroyed a cherished illusion—that Mexican citizens lived in, and tolerated, a regime that was neither transparent nor just but profoundly, reassuringly, predictable.

It's not that the old rules don't apply anymore but that there is no longer any way of knowing when they do. The opposition is allowed to win in some states and is denied victory in others. The gov-



Raúl and Carlos Salinas de Gortari, and the three assassination victims. There hasn't been this much trouble since before the revolution.

STEVEN DANA; PHOTOS: SIPA, REFORMA, AP, SYGMA

ernment talks peace with the rebel Zapatistas in Chiapas, but in the nearby state of Guerrero peasants get mowed down by the Policía Judicial. Facing a crime wave, the Mexico City police announce that "suspicious-looking" people will be detained at checkpoints, then back down the following day in deference to a civic uproar. Drugs are everywhere—even, it seems, in the government. Former President Salinas's brother is in jail, accused of masterminding the murder of Ruiz Massieu, the PRI leader, and, indeed, Salinas, who was seen for years in the admiring light in which he cast himself, is no longer the hero of a sweeping neoliberal economic reform but the protagonist of a grotesque drama and the object of an enraged nation's scorn.

WHEN I interviewed Salinas in August a year ago, shortly before the election of his successor, his administration was still reeling from the Zapatista uprising in Chiapas and the assassination of Colosio, but the President himself had managed to hold on to high popularity ratings and, for a ruler who had less than four months to go in office, to an unusual degree of political control. (Mexican Presidents serve a single six-year term.) I told him a story that a Cabinet Secretary had once told me about a former President, the easygoing Adolfo López Mateos:

"Adolfo," the Secretary asked, "now that it's all over, how did it feel to be President, to enjoy such absolute power?"

"The first year," López Mateos replied, "when people came up to me and said, 'Señor Presidente, you are God,' I felt sickened by their servility. The second year, when they said it I said, 'Thank you very much.' The third year, I felt rather pleased. The fourth year, when they came up and said 'Señor Presidente, you are God!' I thought to myself, That's an exaggeration! The fifth year, I looked at myself in the mirror and thought, Could it really be?"

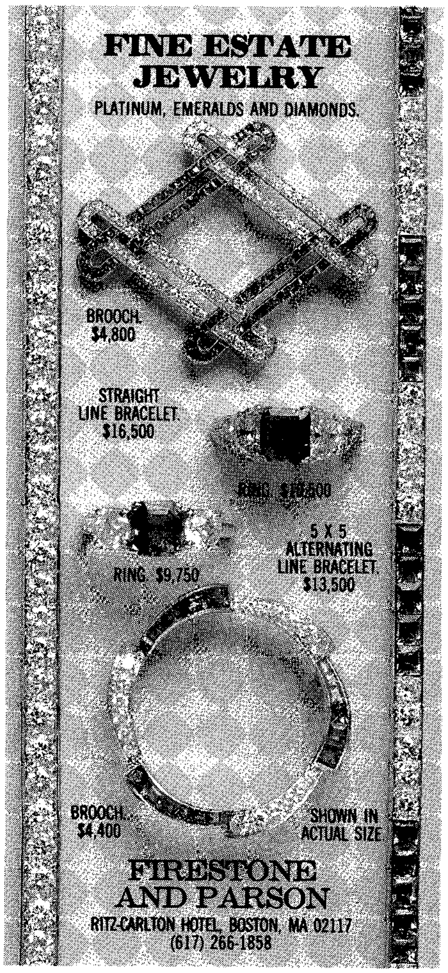
"And the sixth year?" the Secretary asked.

"The sixth year," the former President replied, "I asked myself why I hadn't committed suicide during the fifth."

Salinas, a man with an immense liveliness that can easily overshadow an unprepossessing appearance, listened attentively to the story and then laughed it off. Six weeks later, Ruiz Massieu, a trusted and ruthless political ally, and, as it happened, the President's ex-brother-in-law, whom Salinas had elevated through the PRI ranks to the post of Party leader, was assassinated. Ignoring issues of conflict of interest, Salinas appointed Ruiz Massieu's younger brother, Mario, who was then deputy attorney general—and who was to become known, disparagingly, as Super Mario—to head an investigation. In November, Mario Ruiz Massieu held a breathtaking press conference, in which he announced his resignation and charged that high PRI officials had blocked the investigation into his brother's murder. (The President, though, had always supported him, Mario said.) In December, Zedillo took power, gave advance warning of a long-overdue devaluation of the peso, and appointed a new special prosecutor to investigate the three *magnicidios*—or big-time murders—of the Cardinal, the Presidential candidate, and the Party leader. In January, following a run on the peso, the economy collapsed. On the last day of February, the special prosecutor, Pablo Chapa Bezanilla, arrested former President Salinas's brother, Raúl, and accused him of masterminding the murder of José Francisco Ruiz Massieu.

The days that followed this arrest are the ones that people remember. Mario Ruiz Massieu, after being called in for questioning about his investigation of his brother's murder, fled the country on March 2nd, but he was arrested at Newark International Airport on charges of bringing in undeclared cash (more than thirty thousand dollars' worth) and was subsequently charged in Mexico with covering up Raúl Salinas's role in the crime. That same day, at one-thirty in the morning, former President Salinas, looking haggard, knocked on the door of a house in a working-class neighborhood in the northern industrial city of Monterrey and asked the startled occupants if they would mind giving him shelter while he went on a hunger strike.

The hunger strike lasted two days, during which Mexicans had time to ponder many things. Most important, as the first images sent from Monterrey by a flock of dazed reporters landed on the TV screens back home, there was the obvious question: Had Salinas lost his mind? We saw him perched on the edge of a cot, with a couple of photographs on the night table—not of his family but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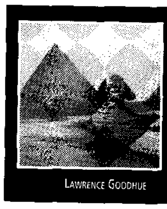
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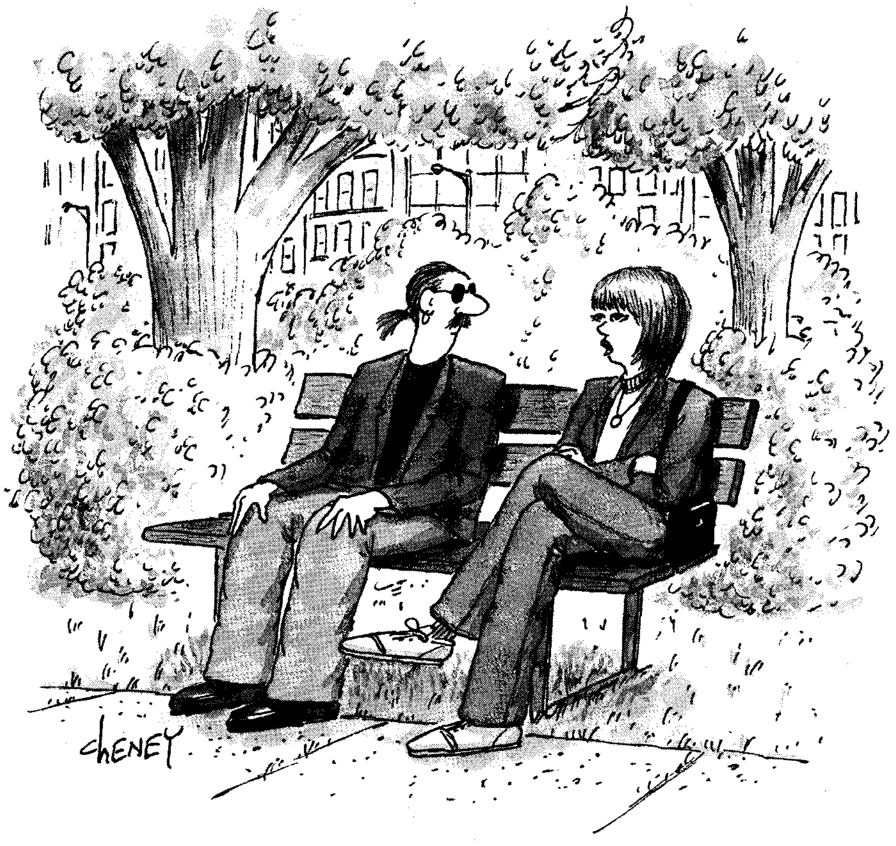
of himself at press-the-flesh events. Next to the photographs was the fancy bottled water that he had sworn to consume exclusively as long as the fast lasted. Never a large man, he now looked as if he were being devoured by the glove-leather bomber jacket he was wearing. The former President seemed bewildered. And lonely.

In groups, reporters were allowed into the fasting room. Salinas repeated a single message to each: He was certainly not on strike because his brother had been charged in connection with the murder of his former brother-in-law and good friend; he had faith in the justice system. No, he felt that a historic injustice was being committed by those who implied that he had been involved in the murder of Colosio, and by those others (namely, President Zedillo and his team) who laid the blame for the current economic earthquake on his own long refusal to devalue. He would fast until his name was cleared.

Perhaps this was the moment when Mexico, as those of us who were born and brought up here knew it, came to an end. Or perhaps it was a few weeks earlier, in the state of Tabasco. Elections for governor had been held there last November, and an opposition leftist party and the PRI were both claiming victory. In private negotiations, Zedillo and his people agreed that the PRI candidate would resign and that the opposition candidate would be allowed to take power. On January 19th, in what amounted to a mutiny against the President, the Tabasco PRI staged a raid on the Government House in the state capital and installed its candidate, and he remains there. Or perhaps the old Mexico came to an end almost a year earlier, when Colosio was assassinated. The fact is that a system of perfect, unquestioned central authority, in which the absolute untouchability of Presidents past, present, and future was the ruling tenet, is no longer in place. Twenty hours after Salinas arrived at the house in Monterrey—the home of Señora Rosa Ofelia Coronado—he flew to Toluca, the capital of the state of Mexico, adjoining Mexico City, and then back to Monterrey, having either met with or failed to meet with Zedillo (we don't really know) to negotiate about his future. And twenty hours after that, back at Señora Coronado's home, he received Zedillo's Agrarian Reform Minister, an old friend of his, and agreed to lift the hunger strike. Salinas was photographed one last time in his native land, preparing to eat a fast-breaking spoonful of soup under the watchful eye of Señora Coronado and her clucking, affectionate neighbors, and then he departed, first to Mexico City, and, a few days later, to the United States. All the old certainties went with him.

FORMER Congressman Manuel Garza, a well-groomed, silver-haired, courtly, and effervescent man of a certain embonpoint, is one of the committed few for whom the Institutional Revolutionary Party's contradictory name still embodies a mystique, and he has traditionalist notions both of his party's place in the world and of diet. I talked with him a couple of times at a chic little European-style coffee shop where he regularly has breakfast with friends, allies, and supplicants, and on both occasions he feasted on eggs and wonderfully rich croissants. For Garza, the PRI's traditional way of practicing politics is neither sordid nor archaic but deeply patriotic, hugely entertaining, and, above all, efficient. There are people who refer to him as an *alquimista*—a vote-fixer, an unprincipled transmuter of opposition triumphs into PRI electoral landslides—but Garza knows that the one thing that counts is power, and that power works best at higher concentrations. "They," he said, encompassing in the pronoun every suspect modernizer from Salinas to the unnamed incompetents on Zedillo's team, "go on so much about the *distancia apropiada* between the Party and the government, but I say that the appropriate distance is *this*"—he dropped a morsel of croissant to make a tight hugging motion with both arms. "That's how my wife and I are—each of us tending to our own affairs, but nice and close. We tell each other what we're up to, and we help each other out. Now, what could be wrong with that?"

Last year was not without troubles for Manuel Garza. For one thing, he was fingered by the attorney general's office in connection with the murder of José Francisco Ruiz Massieu, but he exonerated himself in the interrogations and in an impressive speech before Congress, and his expertise is once again being put to use in the Party in elections small and large. Now that a series of real electoral reforms agreed to by Salinas is in place, candidates of both the left- and



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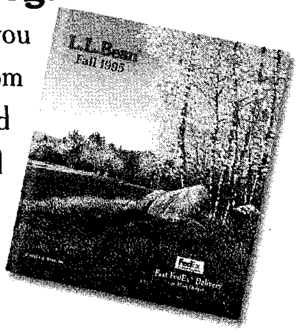

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the right-wing opposition parties are actually running for and winning mayoralties and governorships. As a result, polls are all the rage. Garza scoffs at them. "I only need to talk to ten people in a given town to know what our strength is," he said. "The point is, I always know exactly which ten people to talk to."

Garza stood by helplessly for six years while Salinas used his power to force on the PRI his vision of a democratic transition. In 1989, when Salinas allowed the conservative, largely Catholic opposition party Acción Nacional—known as the PAN—to win the governorship in Baja California, not even the conciliatory Luis Donaldo Colosio, then the head of the PRI, was able to persuade Party stalwarts to put aside their fury. "They want a democracy like Switzerland's," Garza told me. "But this is Mexico."

What he means by that is that the PRI evolved out of deeply Mexican political traditions, and that the one sure way to lose an election is to ignore this history. Take, for example, the *acarreados*, or trucked-in demonstrators, invariably poor, who at PRI or other official rallies are equipped with a hat, a noisemaker, a sandwich, and a beer and are told to cheer loudly. Left-wing intellectual types find this practice particularly distasteful. "But why do we have these demonstrations?" Garza asked me socratically. "Because they are demonstrations of the Party's strength, support, and organizational ability. They are the opportunity for our leaders to show—to contribute—what they have. Nowadays, we get sneered at for having *acarreados*, but we say, 'Let's see *you* truck them in!' "

Not long after being sworn in as the Presidential candidate last spring, Zedillo made a campaign stop in San Cristóbal de las Casas, in the convulsed state of Chiapas. Zedillo, who is not only a modernizer but a modest and uncharismatic man, had evidently instructed his campaign team to skip the *acarreados* and the hoopla. A couple of dozen of us reporters and a larger security contingent stood in the central plaza of San Cristóbal and watched as the candidate climbed on a park bench and addressed his campaign speech exclusively to us. No one else stopped to listen. Several weeks into this type of event, Zedillo and his people apparently began to fear that he might actually lose an election with a level playing field, and they turned to the Party traditionalists, who delivered one rally after another packed with ecstatic thousands. Zedillo immediately started climbing in the polls, looked much more cheerful, and won forty-nine per cent of the vote in the largest turnout and very probably the cleanest vote in Mexico's history.

ZEDILLO has repeatedly promised to modernize the Presidency by redistributing power among the branches of government, and each renewed promise is a dagger in the PRI *histórico's* heart. Part of the problem is that the PRI respects power and authority above all else, yet President Zedillo continues to behave as if he were not the country's Chief Executive but a replacement actor, brought onstage to play a scene or two until the star's throat clears. Zedillo is regarded as a decent, upstanding family man, who has never, to anyone's knowledge, made a dishonest peso. He is fair-minded and extremely intelligent. Unlike all recent Presidents, he is of the people. (As a boy, he sold newspapers and shined shoes.)

Zedillo was very much part of Salinas's little team of foreign-educated economists, but he was a second-level member and had never held elected office. He was not on the short list of candidates who are unofficially vetted by the PRI's informal council of elders before the President decides who is to be his successor. After the Party's designation of the doomed Luis Donaldo Colosio, Zedillo was put in charge of running his campaign. He didn't do particularly well by the personable, mild-mannered candidate, and in retrospect it seems clear that his weakness as Colosio's campaign manager was the same weakness he has as President—he is a terrible salesman. There is an odd proviso in the Mexican constitution which prohibits anyone from running for President who has served in the Cabinet within six months of the election, and this left Zedillo as virtually the only member of Salinas's inner circle

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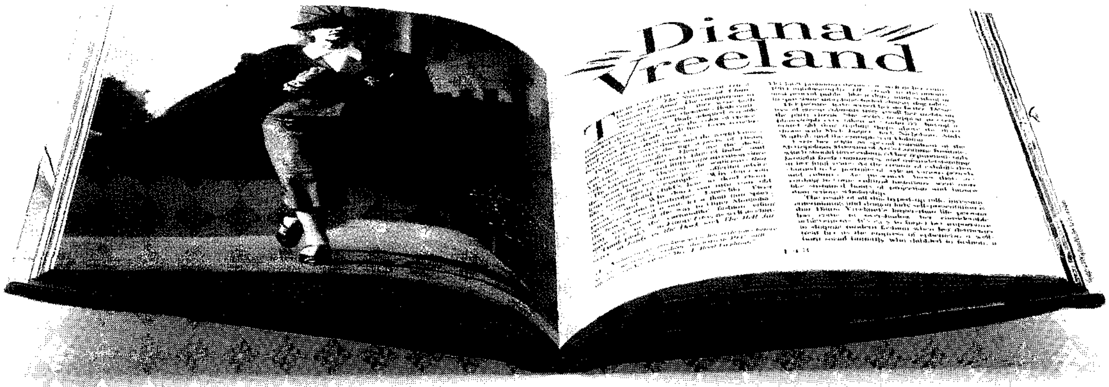
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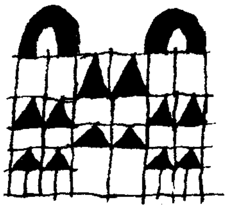
who was available to run. It is probably the last thing he would have wished to do, but on December 1st he took the oath of office. His Inaugural promises were austere, and so was his audience's response, but, to his credit, he recognized that the legitimacy of his Presidency depended on the government's bringing the murderers of Colosio, Ruiz Massieu, and Cardinal Posadas to trial. "We will not rest until justice is done," he proclaimed, and, for once, brought his audience to its feet.

KEEPING track of the course of justice is a far more complicated task in Mexico than it is in the United States, where the jury system guarantees both public access to criminal cases and a drama-laden context in which to understand them. In Mexico, a judge hears private testimony from prosecutor and defendant, questions both sides, examines documents and other evidence, and, having come to his own conclusion, either clears the defendant or declares him guilty and decrees a sentence. The trial record must be made available to the defendant and his lawyer, but there is no right of public access.



Nevertheless, we know that in the case of the murdered Cardinal, Chapa Bezanilla—Zedillo's special prosecutor, who replaced Super Mario—examined the same evidence available to earlier investigators and came to what is essentially the same conclusion: that the men who opened the Cardinal's car door and shot him as he pulled up to the curb at the airport were gunmen in the pay of Ramón and Benjamín Arellano Félix, drug traffickers who mistook Posadas for the Arellanos's mortal rival, Joaquín Guzmán, known as El Chapo, or Shorty. (All these parties were actually at the airport, and the gunmen left Guadalajara on a commercial flight.)

The Mexican Church, which was only recently granted the right to speak out on political matters, disputes this version. Some people close to the Mexican Bishops' Conference point out that Posadas was not only prelate of Guadalajara and, earlier, of Tijuana, both of which are major drug-trafficking centers, but also vice-president of the Latin American Episcopal Conference, based in Bogotá, Colombia. A couple of these Church people told me that, in their view, Posadas could have been acting as an intermediary between the Salinas government and the Colombian drug trafficker Pablo Escobar. The Church people speculated that Posadas could have relayed an offer from Escobar to Salinas to give him a list of Mexican officials involved in the drug trade in exchange for asylum. Salinas refused the deal, the theory goes, and Posadas was assassinated as an act of revenge. This explanation is full of holes, but then so is the special prosecutor's notion that a tall elderly gentleman in full church dress, who was well known to his parishioners, and who was wearing a rather large cross on his chest, could have been machine-gunned to death because he was mistaken for Shorty Guzmán.

THESE are, however, simple matters compared with the mess of conflicting versions and senseless arrests and releases that have plagued Chapa Bezanilla's handling of the assassination of Luis Donaldo Colosio. Colosio was shot twice—once from the right, near the temple, and once from the left, through the lower abdomen—on the evening of March 23rd last year, as he walked away from the site of a campaign speech in a working-class shantytown in Tijuana. So much is known without a doubt.

A confessed assassin has been held in a maximum-security prison since two days after the crime. He has been identified as Mario Aburto Martínez, but there is, apparently, along with the larger question of whether he acted alone, the question of whether there is one or two of him, and which of the two he is. Or so says Mario Ruiz Massieu—Super Mario—who is now sitting in a jail in New Jersey awaiting extradition hearings, but who was Under-Secretary of Internal Affairs at the time of Colosio's murder and had access to the investigations. The questions that Mario's statement raised were only a reflection of the suspicion, fear, and cynicism provoked by the murder and by the government's failure to solve it. Should one believe a man who was in charge of investigating his own brother's murder and is now accused of covering up his findings? Is there really a Mario Aburto who is the fall guy and a look-alike who did the shooting? Or is the Aburto now in jail the same man who was wrestled to the ground at the scene of the crime, and was the other one a decoy? Why did Aburto confess so soon after he was grabbed close to Colosio's body holding a gun? In his single press interview to date, given last April to *Zeta*, a Tijuana magazine, he recanted his initial confession, claiming that he meant just to shoot Colosio in the foot, because the candidate had ignored an old lady who wanted to hand him a petition. "My arm was extended when I tripped and that's how the gun went off" near the back of Colosio's head, Aburto claimed in the interview. But is that in fact Aburto's hand in a three-minute video we have stared at, dozens or hundreds of times, shooting straight up and aiming for the temple with a marksman's speed and energy? And, anyway, who fired the second shot?

The video of the moments leading up to Colosio's assassination, which has been used by the government to build its case, doesn't answer these questions. We see a jostling mob pushing forward, away from the camera. At its center is Colosio, seen from the back and encircled by men who do not face in the same direction—Colosio's security detail, trying to communicate with each other and keep the candidate moving. Or are they acting as conspirators, encircling and trapping Colosio as he tries to push forward, so that the killer can do his work? The faces appear and vanish, Colosio keeps moving, and then the deadly hand appears, aims, and fires. At that instant, the camera swerves, and we do not see the second shot.

The first special investigation of the crime, which was commissioned by President Salinas, was run by Miguel Montes, who concluded after a three-month inquiry that Aburto fired both shots. Colosio, he maintained, did not drop instantly to the ground, face forward, as most people do who have received massive injuries to the brain stem from a bullet wound; instead, he executed a swooping counterclockwise pirouette, and thus received Aburto's second shot from left front to right back, with an upward trajectory. Montes placed three people under arrest—all of them connected in some way both to Colosio's security detail and to an ultra-

PRI group of local policemen. Montes's investigation ended with the announcement that Aburto, a Lee Oswald-like obsessive who called himself the Eagle Knight and was associated with a weird Tijuana ultranationalist, had acted alone, but the other suspects remained in jail.

The public has seen Aburto three times since the murder. During the equivalent of what is known in the United States as the perp walk, he was shown in a bulletproof glass cage—a sullen-looking, bull-necked young man with full cheeks, a big nose, and a receding chin. Later, he was videotaped reading his second deposition and, on a separate occasion, reënacting the crime, and when the two tapes were leaked to television newscasts we learned that Aburto is strikingly self-possessed, articulate, and intelligent, and was capable of attempting a filibuster of the proceedings by means of legal technicalities, even without the help of a lawyer. We know that he kept a notebook full of scribblings and drawings of pre-Hispanic eagle knights in his mother's house in Tijuana, because the attorney general's office made them public. We know about his parents and siblings—peasants from Michoacán who migrated first to the miserable shantytowns that ring Tijuana and then to California—because they have been willing to have some contact with the press ever since May of '94, when they fled to the United States for good, to request political asylum. We did not know until very recently that the accused assassin was kept shackled and in solitary confinement while Salinas remained President, and that Aburto now denies any role at all in the shooting.

The prisoner is allowed one ten-minute telephone conversation every week with his family, and transcribed tapes of these conversations were published recently in the newspaper *La Jornada*. In the tapes, Aburto sometimes sounds hazy, and sometimes mad—particularly when he is repeating his obsessive desire that the F.B.I. and the C.I.A. be allowed to take charge of the investigation, because only they will obtain trustworthy results. When he is sounding particularly flaky, his relatives try to make sure that the Aburto on the other end of the line is *their* Aburto. "What was the name of the son of the señora who lived on the other side of La Rinconada?" they may ask, out of the blue. Aburto's parents and siblings take turns pouring hasty messages of love and solidarity into the mouthpiece before handing the phone over to their legal adviser for a few precious minutes of consultation. Aburto sometimes cries. He always protests his innocence. On one occasion, he scolds his father, because in an interview the old man said that Aburto used to meet with other suspects in the weeks preceding the crime. He is very much aware that his family and their adviser are not his only audience. "O.K., look, I pretended I was guilty in order to save all of you, understand?" he says. "But what I'm saying, what I've always told you, is that I don't know what happened."

In the first weeks of the investigation, Zedillo's attorney general announced (a) that a bullet picked up at the scene of the crime several hours after Colosio died was a plant; (b) that Colosio did in fact drop instantly to the ground when he received the first bullet; and (c) that therefore there must have been a second gunman, whom he identified as Othón Cortez Vázquez, a member of the PRI who was put on Colosio's security detail at the last minute. Since then, the presiding judge on the case has reviewed Chapa Bezanilla's evidence and released all the suspects Montes arrested. Still in jail is Chapa Bezanilla's second suspect, Othón Cortez. When Othón appeared on television the day of his arraignment, he collapsed three times. Prison authorities attributed the fainting fits to diabetes; Othón's family has medical reports indicating that they were the result of torture. He swears that he is innocent. Chapa Bezanilla's evidence is the too familiar video, in which Othón can be seen behind Colosio, a split second before the murder, nodding sharply through the dense crowd in what seems to be the direction of the first gunman—as if, the prosecution claims, to say "Now!"

But how could Othón have maneuvered the famous second shot, which traversed Colosio's abdomen from left front to right back, if he was standing slightly *behind* the candidate less than a second before the first shot was fired? If Chapa Bezanilla, who is the source for most of the leaks about the case that

"Why would I want to watch 'Central Park West' when I'm living it?"

find their way into the papers on an almost daily basis, has an explanation, he has yet to put it forward.

THE third murder that President Zedillo vowed to solve—that of José Francisco Ruiz Massieu, the PRI secretary-general—is even more problematic, because it involves a dizzying cast of minor characters and henchmen and, more important, because Chapa Bezanilla has formally accused Raúl Salinas, who is both the former President's brother and the victim's one-time brother-in-law, of ordering it.

José Francisco Ruiz Massieu was sued for divorce more than ten years ago by Adriana Salinas de Gortari after she accused him of being a homosexual, the *Times* reported recently. Following the divorce, Ruiz Massieu remarried and maintained his political career and his friendship with his former brother-in-law Carlos Salinas, who, in his last year in office, promoted him over the traditional Party leadership to the secretary-general's chair. Four months later, as Ruiz Massieu was leaving a breakfast meeting with PRI *diputados* in downtown Mexico City, a young man wearing jeans and sneakers stepped up to his car and fired a machine gun. The gun jammed almost immediately, and only one bullet emerged, but it was fatal. The assassin had been told to run toward the nearest metro station, but he didn't remember where it was and ran the wrong way. A bank guard blocked his escape, and he threw down his gun and surrendered. The date was September 28th—almost exactly six months after the murder of Colosio.

The victim's brother, Mario Ruiz Massieu, became an instant hero by taking over the investigation that day. The assassin had originally identified himself as a small-time hoodlum from Guerrero, but under Super Mario's ministrations he soon revealed himself as Daniel Aguilar Treviño, from Tamaulipas, a state known for its seafood and its drug traffickers, and, less widely, for a small but influential group of once radical—Maoist—politicians close to Raúl Salinas and his powerful brother. It was also the birthplace of another bit player in the drama—a wheeling-dealing, two-timing PRI official and freshman *diputado* named Manuel Muñoz Rocha. It was the obscure Muñoz Rocha, Super Mario revealed, who had hired the team that put together his brother's murder. Unfortunately, Muñoz Rocha vanished the day after the murder. Mario not only failed to find him but failed to answer an all-important question: Who hired Muñoz Rocha?

Five months later, in February, Chapa Bezanilla, Mario's replacement as special prosecutor, said that Mario knew the answer and had failed to act on it. Muñoz Rocha, Chapa Bezanilla said, had been acting on orders from the President's brother, Raúl Salinas. Chapa Bezanilla's principal—and perhaps only—source for this version of events is Muñoz Rocha's henchman Fernando Rodríguez González, an undistinguished PRI apparatchik with a shady past who, by his own admission, is the man who hired the flustered murderer and some equally incompetent accomplices. He has changed his story nine times since he was arrested, most recently in an interview with the daily *Reforma*. (Unlike Aburto, he has three comfortable cells in a medium-security prison, and was allowed to talk freely to a reporter.) In the interview, Rodríguez González implicated not only Raúl Salinas but the former President himself, charging that Carlos Salinas used his private secretary to pay the killers. Carlos Salinas's motive for killing the father of his own nieces, as presented by Rodríguez González, makes no sense: "José Francisco begins to pressure Carlos Salinas and the latter gradually gives ground. . . . José Francisco Ruiz Massieu knew a lot about Carlos Salinas de Gortari and his personal accumulation of wealth." Yet a majority of Mexicans who have been polled are more than willing to believe Rodríguez González, because they are willing to believe the worst of a man they also blame for the many ills they have suffered since the economy collapsed, eight months ago.

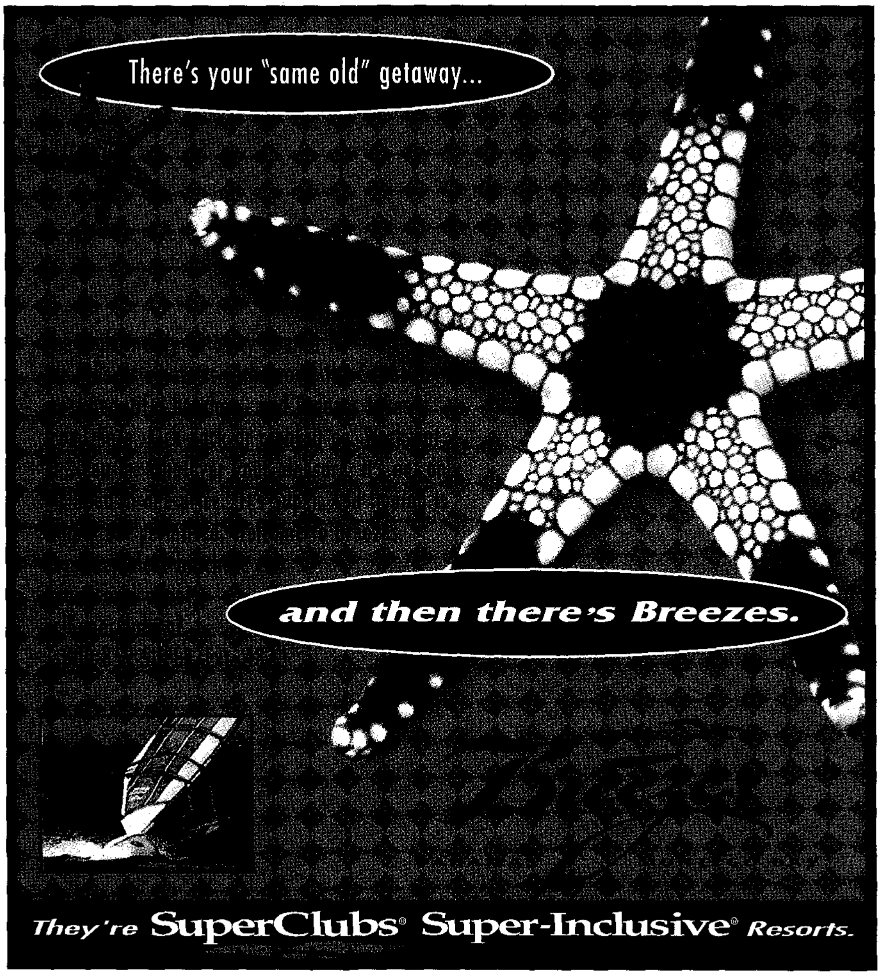
Chapa Bezanilla has not called the former President in for questioning, nor has he come up with strong evidence, or even a satisfactory motive, to justify keeping Raúl Salinas in jail. But there is the singular personality of the former President's brother to consider. Raúl Salinas has been in the shadow of his brother, and has been his accomplice, since earliest childhood, when Carlos, aged four, Raúl, five, and an eight-year-old friend were involved in the death of their twelve-year-old maid, whom they shot while staging a make-believe execution. Though Raúl Salinas has repeatedly sworn to the contrary, there is ample evidence that he was Muñoz Rocha's good friend and political sponsor. The day after Ruiz Massieu's murder, phone records show, Muñoz Rocha phoned Raúl Salinas's house and, according to Raúl's bodyguard, spoke directly to Raúl. The two agreed to meet in a Mexico City restaurant, according to a friend of Muñoz Rocha's, who drove him to the appointment. Muñoz Rocha (but not Raúl Salinas) was seen leaving the restaurant that day, September 29th, and has not been seen in Mexico again. He is presumed dead.

Mario Ruiz Massieu is accused of covering up Raúl Salinas's putative role in his brother's murder, and is awaiting a decision on the second round of the extradition petition filed by the Mexican government. The first extradition petition against him was denied by Judge Ronald Hedges, of the Third Circuit, in part because the testimony damning Mario—namely, Rodríguez González's second deposition—was probably extracted by torture. For that matter, Mario himself is being charged here with the torture of several of the people he arrested in relation to his brother's murder, and he is also being asked to explain some deposits he made in a Texas bank between March and November last year, the period he served as deputy attorney general. The deposits total nearly ten million dollars.

ALMOST a year has passed since the murder of José Francisco Ruiz Massieu. It's been eighteen months since Luis Donald Colosio was assassinated. More than two years after Cardinal Posadas was killed, Chapa Bezanilla has concluded that his death could only have been accidental, because no one would possibly have wanted to do in such a nice man. The attorney general stated in passing, in a sidewalk interview a couple of weeks ago, that the investigation of Ruiz Massieu's murder has also ended. There is no real sense that justice has been done, and at this stage Super Mario is only one of the many characters in a topsy-turvy cast who have turned into villains overnight. He remains unimpressive and undistinguished, as does the Party gofer who stands accused of firing the second shot at Colosio, or the former *diputado* Muñoz Rocha. Yet we continue to be obsessed with these minor players, because they are almost all we know of a murderous tragedy that is playing itself out in a darkened theatre while we are kept, craning and anxious, on the other side of the curtain.

In the frightening nightscape, anyone can be a murderer, and one's political allegiance is established according to whom one chooses to accuse. Even master players like Manuel Garza can get lost in this shadow world. The last time I talked to him, I had just come back from the state of Michoacán, where gubernatorial elections are to be held in November. I asked him if he was worried about a certain town in which the conservative PAN, which used to get eight or nine votes at election time, had pulled in ten times as many last August. Garza looked at me benignly for a second and crowed, "But we got two *thousand!* Never forget to do your sums!"

Numbers aren't really the issue anymore, though. What counts is not that Garza can still round up the votes but that someone within his party once tried to involve him in a murder, and that he, in turn, is willing to speculate with a stranger about which of his comrades the real murderer could be. Leaks and rumors have become the accepted form of political infighting, and the ghoulish pleasures of speculation continue to replace informed political discussion—in large part, perhaps, because the attorney general's office continues to equivocate on the question of whether Carlos Salinas will be questioned in relation to the murders of Colosio and Ruiz Massieu. But the leaks and rumors are also evidence that although the PRI still rules, it is coming apart. Even more than the blood already shed, they prove beyond a doubt that the old loyalties that were a system's binding force are dead. ♦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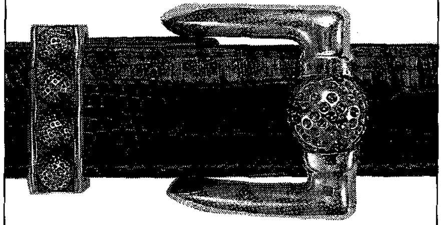

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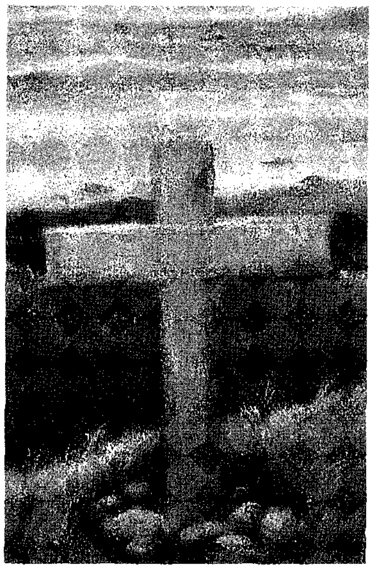
PERSONAL HISTORY

A SMALL MEMORIAL

To the children the author tried to forget.

BY PETER CAREY

LATELY when I think of my children I have begun to remember not just the four-year-old who is rattling on my doorknob as I write, or the eight-year-old whom I will take to a swimming lesson this afternoon, but those other children I have spent a long time trying to forget.



The man sits and asks me how I want the babies buried.

These are children from my first marriage, children now a long time dead.

In 1961, when I was eighteen years old, I sat in the waiting room of an illegal abortionist in Melbourne, Australia. Beside me sat an attractive, easygoing woman who would later be my wife but was at that moment my first girlfriend. Let us call her H.

There were many others waiting with us, but H. and I felt alone and frightened. We knew we were at an abortionist's, but it never occurred to us that all those other men and women (standing by the door, reading the *Sporting Globe*, the *Woman's Weekly*) were also conspiring to terminate pregnancies. They looked married, respectable, not illegal at all. One woman, who had swollen legs and varicose veins, sat with a paper bag on her lap, knitting a green sweater. It was hard to associate any of these people with sex or the back seat of a car at the Star Drive-in Theatre—with any of the things that had brought us to this point where one of us might be injured, the pair of us arrested.

Years later, when we were both in our early fifties and were married to other people, H. and I met for breakfast at the Melbourne Hilton, and she brought, as I had asked her to, photographs from our early days together. And it is because of these photographs, spread out before me now as I write, that it is so easy for me to recall H.'s open, fresh face, her handsome bones, her tanned skin, her curly, short hair. She wore a shirtdress that we incorrectly called a "muumuu"—a light, striped summer dress that is somehow mixed up in my mind with the events that got us "in trouble." I wore a yellow terry-cloth shirt and black-and-white checked cotton trousers.

A year before, I had been at a boys' boarding school. Now I was free, smoking cigarettes, having sex. I was an enthusiast, a compulsive talker, a would-be cartoonist. I had an Ornette Coleman record called "Change of the Century," which I played for H. when I first met her—the track called "Una Muy Bonita." We may not have kissed that time, but still I'd like to think so, with Ornette Coleman playing in Melbourne, Australia, in 1961.

In Melbourne in 1961, the bars closed at six o'clock at night. The White Australia Policy was still in force. You could be arrested for having an abortion or reading James Joyce's "Ulysses."

H.'s brother had an M.G. TD and a heavy Ronson cigarette lighter that bore a family resemblance to a Cadillac. He and his friends lay around the living room in the industrial suburb of Dandenong, lighting their farts with their Ronsons. They lay on their backs and drew their knees up to their chests. They stretched the fabric of their trousers tight across their butts. The farts burned with a sudden blue flame. H.'s brother had a pair of cook's Daks; I can see them

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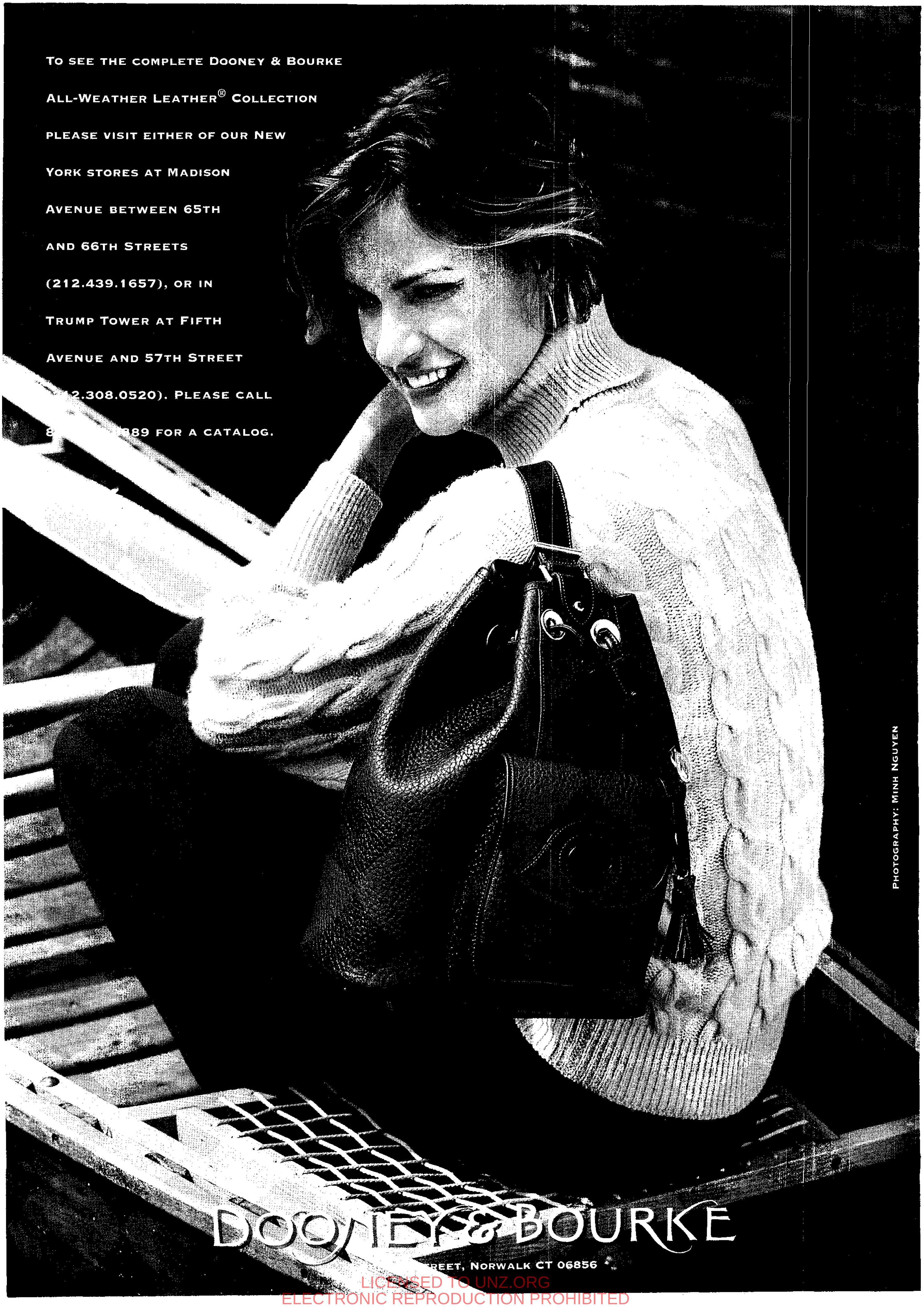To see the complete Dooney & Bourke
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now with the blue flame shooting out of them. I thought lighting the farts was infantile, but I knew the trousers were very cool. I bought a pair myself within a month of meeting him. (Thirty-four years later, you can still see kitchen workers in New York City sitting on the pavement smoking, wearing trousers exactly like the ones I wore all through that spring, when I was busy falling in love, trying to be a poet, faking my experimental results for the force of gravity, busily on my way to flunking out of a science degree.) And I was still wearing them four months later, when I set out to procure an abortion, dropping the coins into the pay phone to call a doctor (whose name and address I must now alter). It was eight o'clock at night, and concrete trucks were rumbling past. I was about to ask this doctor to break the law, and I was both amazed at myself and terrified.

"Freddie," I said when the doctor answered. "It's Peter Carey." He knew who I was, of course. He was a doctor in the beachside town where our family vacationed. His father had been my father's friend. He was Dr. Colman, they both were, the father and the son, but they had been known more usually as Dr. Freddie and Young Dr. Freddie. Now that the father was dead the son had assumed his father's title: Dr. Freddie. He was an educated man, young Freddie, and liked to say "varsity" rather than "university," which seemed to my ears most cosmopolitan. He was Catholic and lived in the same house as his receptionist, although I did not appreciate the nuances at the time. "Hello, Peter," he said when he took my call.

"Freddie," I said, "I think my girlfriend might be pregnant."

"O.K.," he said. "What makes you think that?"

"Her period is late."

"How late?"

"Two months," I said, "and I was wondering: Is there anything you can do?"

There was a longish silence.

"I didn't know who else to talk to," I said. "I'm sorry, Freddie."

"I think the best thing is, you should come and see me."

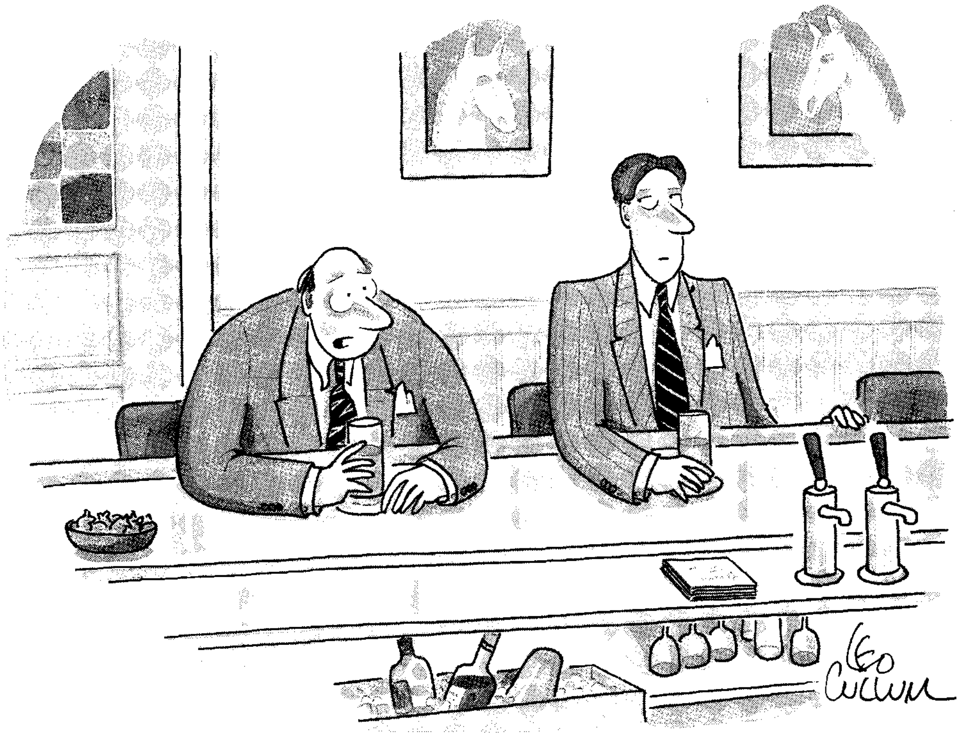
"Tomorrow?"

"That's the trick."

"Should I bring my girlfriend?"

"Not necessary, old bean."

"Thanks, Freddie."



"I was on the cutting edge. I pushed the envelope. I did the heavy lifting. I was the rainmaker. Then I ran out of metaphors."

• •

"And, Peter, don't call me Freddie. You can call me Dr. Colman." When I hung up, I was no longer preoccupied by H.'s pregnancy, but by this last, mortifying rebuke. I felt fourteen fucking years old.

NEXT day, I drove south toward the town of Portsea, not to Portsea itself, but to a small town nearby. I sat in Dr. Colman's waiting room, with the farmers and the retired men with white Panama hats and the young mothers from the Housing Commission developments, where the streets had names like Amethyst and Sapphire. My family had been coming here for so many summers, so many Easters, Christmases, and weekends, that people I didn't know, total strangers, could tell me about the time when I was two years old and cut my foot on broken glass.

The contents of Dr. Colman's office were as familiar to me as my own living room: the eccentric gas fire; the broken oar from a surf lifesaving boat; the ashtray made from an artillery shell; the photograph of old Dr. Freddie standing on the beach in a black overall bathing suit; the cracked leather examination couch where I had had the papilloma burned from my toe in extremely painful circumstances.

When I was finally admitted to the surgery, young Freddie sat behind his desk in his Harris-tweed sports jacket, smoking a Craven A cigarette. It was clear from the moment I walked in that he had decided what to do. He pulled a small pad of paper toward him and began writing on it.

"This is what we use as a test," he said, tearing the sheet of paper off and sliding it across the desk to me. "Just a little test."

"O.K.," I said. "Thanks. This is really nice of you."

"Maybe she's not pregnant at all. So this is a test. Do you understand?" he asked me sternly, looking over the top of his glasses.

"I think she really is, you know. She's two months late."

"It's just a way of making sure she's not pregnant," he said.

"But if she is . . ." I insisted.

"It'll give her a period," he said at last. He was a Catholic. Perhaps he did not like to think about what he was doing.

"O.K. Do I take it to the chemist's?"

"Yes, but not here. Take it to the city, that's a good bloke."

"Thank you," I said. "Thank you so

much, Dr. Colman. Is it O.K. if you don't tell my parents?"

He shook my hand. "Just take it to the city, that's a good chap."

I HAD a 1949 Armstrong Siddeley with leather upholstery, a sunshine roof, and a pre-selective gearbox of seemingly futuristic design. Six months later, this elegant old English car would fall apart and nearly kill me. It would slice off the top of my scalp and splash melodramatic blood all over my undergraduate poetry. But on this spring morning in 1961 it seemed to work just fine, and I drove it back to the city, my foot flat to the boards. I took the back road, with my arm out the window. The sky was a huge cobalt blue. I imagined our troubles were over.

What then happened in that Melbourne chemist's shop I later made into an amusing scene in a novel, but at the time it was not amusing at all. The pharmacist looked at the piece of paper and said that it was not a prescription, because it did not have the doctor's name on it. He showed it to me. What he said was true. My friendly family doctor had suffered an attack of cowardice too complicated for me to imagine even now. He had written the name of a drug on a plain sheet of paper but had neither signed it nor identified himself.

The pharmacist asked me if I knew what the drug was for. He asked this very loudly.

I was an eighteen-year-old who looked so young that I often could not get served at Jimmy Watson's Wine Bar. I stood there in the chemist's shop with my skinny arms straight by my sides, feeling the blood rising in my cheeks.

"Do you know what this does?"

I hesitated. "Yes," I said.

"I could call the police," the pharmacist said. There were other people in the shop—grownups, respectable people, who turned to stare at me. I fled the shop, and I can still remember the feeling of panic, of wrong, of impending disaster as I rushed to hide myself deep inside the city crowds.

A FEW years later, abortion became a very public issue. There were police raids, judicial inquiries, pictures in the paper. The names and addresses of abortionists then became very public knowledge. But in 1961 the names and addresses were much more difficult to obtain: a friend gave us a phone number scribbled on a torn scrap of paper.

H. phoned the number from a public call box. A voice answered with a simple "Yes?"

H. nervously explained her "situation," and we were told where to go and when, and to bring fifty pounds in cash. This was a huge amount of money in 1961. No one we knew had fifty pounds.

Finally, however, we found a benefactor—one of my zoology professors. Professor T. was a kindly man. He asked us to his home, and his wife cooked us dinner. Just the same, we were not surprised that he had taken legal counsel before making us the loan.

When we had those ten deep-blue five-pound notes, when we had found the waiting room, when H. had submitted to examination, the news was still not good.

"She's three months pregnant," the strawberry-blond receptionist said. She said this to me, not to H. "We can't do anything without her parents' consent."

"We've got the fifty pounds," I said. "We brought it with us."

"Go away," she said. "Come back with her mother or her father."

THIS was 1961, but not yet the sixties. If the Pill had arrived, we had not noticed it. It was before Haight-Ashbury, before Woodstock. It was, in effect, the fifties, and teen-agers were expected to keep their clothes on when in each other's company. To tell the woman, whom I will call Mrs. Z., that her daughter and I had had sex was just unthinkable. To say that she was pregnant was to imagine a disgrace too shattering even to contemplate.

But of course we did. We did it as we had done the other things, as we had borrowed the fifty pounds, rung the doorbell at the abortionist's. We did it on a quiet suburban afternoon in Dandenong, in a comfortable, untidy house that I had come to think of as my second home.

We sat in the kitchen and drank tea.

Then one of us said *it*. Which one? I don't know. One of us opened our mouth and made the words come out.

H.'s mother was sometimes given to picturesque upset, but she took our news calmly—far more calmly than anyone could have anticipated.

If we had been a little older, a little less frightened, we would not have been

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so surprised: in the suburban world we lived in, this was a woman famous for her eccentricities. As a teen-ager, she had attempted to flee an isolated bush town carrying nothing but an unloaded revolver. She had mailed her wedding invitations with the wrong date on them, on purpose. She did not like housework—dishwashing, dusting—and she had been known to leave unfolded sheets lying in the laundry for months on end. She did not make the bed. She kept a five-foot-high stack of newspapers in the kitchen, waiting until she would have time to read them. This was before feminism, and there was no one to tell her that this behavior was O.K. She did not care.

This was not, I now see, a woman who was going to persuade her eldest daughter to begin life as a mother at the age of twenty.

Thus she quickly became our co-conspirator, and when it was time to go back to that single-story Victorian terrace house in G—— Road, she came with us. While the abortionist's receptionist counted the fifty pounds, Mrs. Z. stood by our side. When H. went in for her operation, Mrs. Z. sat with me in the park.

And there, on a park bench, in the sunshine, my future mother-in-law and I talked. Doubtless I was being insensitive, but when she said, "This doesn't happen from doing it just one time," I decided not to hear the question she was really asking me. I remember being relieved that we were so companionable and easy with each other.

While we sat on a park bench, H. lost her baby. I met her afterward in the waiting room. She was strangely unchanged and yet also changed absolutely. She was pale and shaky, lost in her own pain. We drove back along the Prince's Highway, down through the industrial suburbs with incongruous names like Noble Park, to Dandenong, where poor H. went to bed with a hot-water bottle. I don't remember what lie we told her father. He was a good and decent man. I still stand, guilty and embarrassed, in his imaginary presence.

I DON'T think H. and I ever talked about that baby, and yet I don't think, given the choice all over again, that we would have done any of it differently. She must have grieved for the child, but she never said so, and I was young and callow and it would not have occurred to me that she might.

Our hearts were not broken, and we went on to our new young marriage, and our new young lives. H. was twenty-three, and I was twenty-one. We travelled the world—Asia, the Middle East, Europe, London.

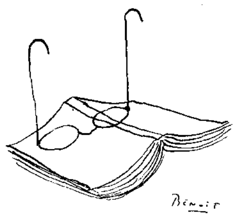
We came back to Australia, to three-quarters of an acre and a little house. We planted hundreds of trees—eucalyptus, acacias, melaleucas. We were ready to begin our family.

I had a job in an advertising agency and wrote short stories at night. H. was working at the Red Cross. We were now twenty-seven and twenty-nine. We did not speak about the lost baby. That had been so long ago.

H. QUICKLY became pregnant. I remember her slowly swelling belly, the nights by the log fire, the feeling of domesticity, the certainty of how my life, our life, would continue.

This was 1970, and the world was changing. We were active in the Vietnam Moratorium Committee and knew that our phone was tapped. We were socialists. Our bookshelves were stuffed with Frantz Fanon and Regis Debray, but also Beckett, Faulkner, and Ursula Le Guin. We played "Blonde on Blonde" so loudly that it rattled the windows, and yet our own expectations of life were anchored in the fifties. Neither of us expected that H. would have a career. She had been a gifted philosophy student but had dropped out of university to become a photographer's assistant. And, while she was a talented photographer, she was never particularly ambitious. She could take things or leave them. She could lie in the sun. She liked to pursue abstract philosophical puzzles. In her forties, long after we split up, she began to study cartography, and when I think of her doing it I imagine her pursuing her studies with fascination and wonder rather than with ambition. H. had a placidity and an intelligence that I, with all my nervous energy and extravagant dreams, found enviable, sexy.

She did not feel ambivalent about abandoning a career to have children. It



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MINNETONKA MOCCASINS

was our plan, and, as her belly grew, our plan became more and more real. There were no birth classes, no pre-birth education of any type, but there was our baby: we lay in bed and felt it kick.

H. says it was summer, but in my memory it was autumn. The frosts had not arrived, but it was still cold enough to light the fire. It was around midnight, the ashes in the fire were gray, and the house had lost its heat, when H. shook me awake.

I can still see that bedroom: its unadorned convict brick walls, its long jute curtain. I turned on the light—a single naked bulb that stuck out from its black Bakelite fitting on the wall.

"My waters broke," H. said.

"The waters can't have broken. You're only five months. That doesn't happen until the baby's being born."

"Well, everything's wet."

It was. In harsh, unsentimental light, I could see that the sheets were sodden, but I would not believe that what had happened could happen. "Maybe you peed."

"It's not pee. My waters broke."

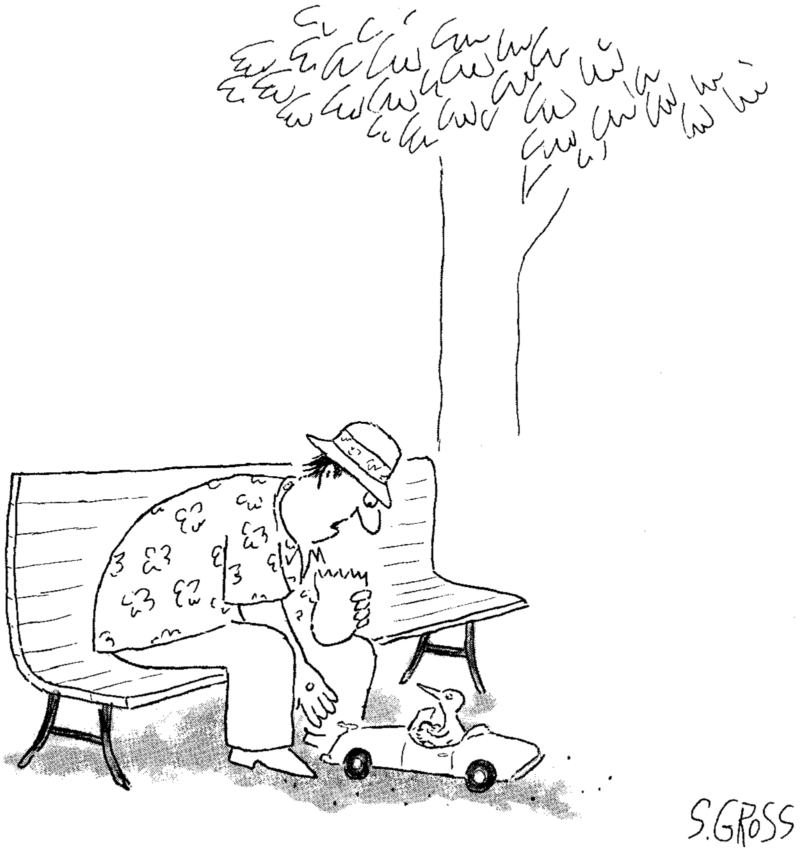
We phoned the doctor, and he said he would meet us at the hospital, some twenty minutes away.

The thing is this: We did not know what was happening. We had not the least damn idea. We locked the house and bumped down the steep clay track and drove out along gravel roads into the suburban night.

I could direct you to the hospital now: Lower Plenty Road, Heidelberg Road—but I forget the suburb's name. It was a small, suburban redbrick hospital near a railway line, but I don't know what it was called.

And there, in a single hospital room, my wife went into labor. She had not been in labor before. Was this labor induced? I have no idea. At the time, I knew less. Did we know we were losing our child? Yes, we did. No, we didn't. We knew because we were told, but we did not believe it because of the pain, its endless pulsing contractions, because of the birth taking place. I held H.'s hand but did not know how else to help her. And when, finally, I was sent away, I left gratefully and stayed in a neon-lit corridor that still keeps pushing its way into my fiction.

But then the baby was born, dead. Did I see her? No, and yet I sometimes imagine that I did. It is mixed up with the next time—and there was a next time, although on that night we did not know there would be one.



"You don't look like you need bread crumbs."

Let me tell the next time now, too. Let it stand for both times, because in truth the two have become the same in my memory.

We had accepted that there was "something wrong" with the first baby, that it was "right" to lose it, but we did not know that more babies would die before this story would be over—that it would be years before H. and I would meet in the Melbourne Hilton and show each other, along with photographs of our youthful selves, baby photographs—babies from our new marriages.

When we were still married, we did not know that the fifty pounds the strawberry-blond woman counted so carefully had also procured an "incompetent cervix," which was why the next pregnancy repeated itself like a sequence from "Last Year at Marienbad." It unwound its long, sickening strand of story in the same bedroom, with the same convict brick walls, the same bare light bulb that still had no shade to soften what it showed.

Like all nightmares, the repetition was not exact. This time there were twins, and when the labor was over they were alive. The nurse emerged from a door and asked me if I wanted to see them. I was again in that damned corridor.

I was afraid.

I walked through a door, and there they were—a boy and a girl, with perfect little hands and faces. They were tiny, and delicate, but there was nothing wrong with them. They had familiar family features which I would later recognize in my sons. I stood and watched our beautiful babies in the oxygen tent and could not believe that they would die.

To the nurse, I said, "Will they be all right?"

"Oh, no," she said. "Oh, no."

How long did they live, my babies?

I swear I do not know. How could I have been so ignorant? I think only that I fled the pain, that *we* fled the pain, the knowledge, chose not to remember. I could not bear to know what it was we had lost. I sat with H. in her hospital room.

"Did you see them?"

"Yes."

We wept together; we wept for our loss. Obviously, I was not heartless. And yet, when I tell you the next part of the story, I fear that I will appear so.

It is eleven o'clock in the morning, and I am sitting in a funeral home with Mrs. Z. We sit on one side of a desk, the funeral director on the other. He is a man of fifty, with a gray sweater underneath his suit. I am a writer of unappetizing short stories, with a pasty face and long hair that needs a wash.

He sits, this man, and asks me how I want the twins buried.

I sit beside Mrs. Z. I can barely speak.

I am not religious, and I cannot bear the religious smell of the funeral home, the flowers, the unctuous voices, the false comfort. Dead is dead. To put a name on plaques, to say prayers—all this is lies, bullshit in the face of the nothingness of death. And in believing this I am at one with my wife, who, even as we meet with the funeral-parlor man, is taking the first of the pills that will dry up the painful milk that has come to feed the dead babies we are discussing.

Slowly we go through the options. We agree on cremation. We agree that the ashes will be put in a wall. I do not ask where the wall is or what it looks like, but I imagine it to be made of damp red bricks with doors like a set of mailboxes. It is an enduring image—one I will be able to see clearly long after I have forgotten the funeral director's face.

"And what names?"

"No names," I say.

"Are you sure?" my mother-in-law asks.

"I don't believe in God," I say.

It is not the point, of course. She knows it is not the point, but she sees the fierceness and fragility of my grief.

"Later," she says gently. "Later—don't you think you might be sorry?"

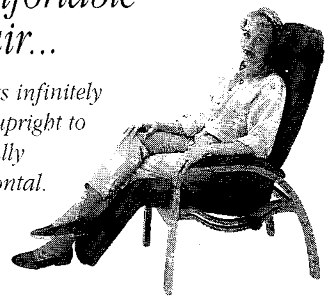
Surely she is thinking of her daughter, of what she would feel herself.

"Are you sure you won't be sorry?"

It's later now.

Looking back on Australia in 1961, I feel I grew up in a dark and ignorant time: a racist immigration policy, great works of English literature banned, abortions performed furtively, illegally, not always well. When I look back on how our story went, H.'s and mine, I don't really see that it could have gone any differently.

I wish only that we had honored those children with a plaque, a name. I will always wish that, forever. ♦



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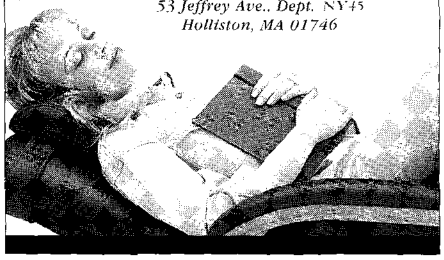

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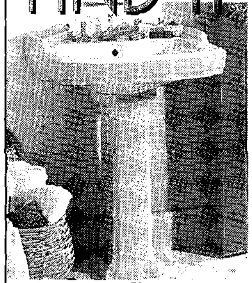

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THE POLITICAL SCENE

POWELL AND THE BLACK ÉLITE

Colin Powell may be the most popular man in America, but what does the nation's black leadership think of his rise, and where does Powell see himself in the politics of race?

BY HENRY LOUIS GATES, JR.

GENERAL COLIN POWELL is a man of maxims, and one of his maxims is that you should never make a decision too early or too late. Like many of the best maxims, this one is true by definition, and is therefore of doubtful practical use. Nonetheless, timing is one of the General's grand subjects, and punctuality, which is timing writ small, is something that the General sets great store by. I arrive at his house fifteen minutes early for our appointment, even though I stopped en route to get my shoes shined. I am vague about military ways, but I suspect that neatness, too, counts. "First thing I noticed," Powell says approvingly of my gleaming brogues when we meet.

The Powells—Colin and Alma, his wife of thirty-three years—live in an expensive development in McLean, Virginia. Their house, which he bought in 1993, after his retirement, is a sprawling contemporary château, buff-colored except for white trim. In front of a three-car garage sits a light-green '68 Volvo station wagon, the upkeep of which is one of his chief hobbies. There is a flower bed, and a front lawn like an advertisement for Scotts lawn-care products; a swimming pool is tucked discreetly out back. Barberry and yew shrubs flank the portico. The generic idea is of the French country manor reinterpreted for the upscale suburban development.

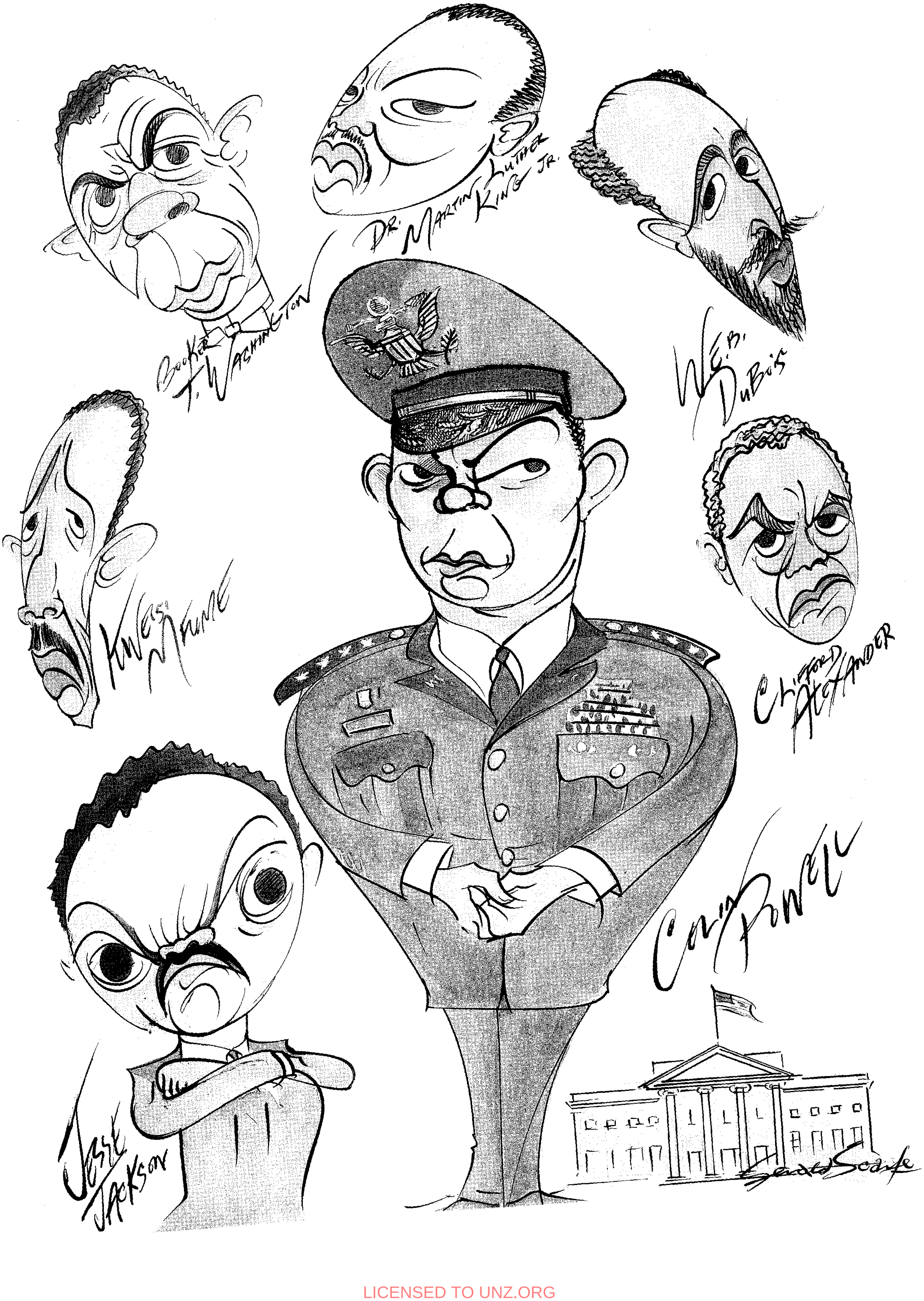
"I'm now a wealthy person," Powell says matter-of-factly. "I wasn't wealthy when I retired. I mean, I just figured out what the white guys were doing." He's speaking of investment, and reinvestment—an engine of economic growth, he'll tell you. Still, the house isn't decorated ostentatiously. It looks comfortable and lived in, if with perhaps a touch of military austerity. Alma, a poised, elegant woman with a café-au-lait complexion and blue-green eyes, ushers me through a marble-floored foyer to the center hall. Off to the left is one of the General's three home offices. This one seems to be the public office—a place more for greeting visitors than for working. Its oak floor and a red leather Queen Anne chair lend the small room an air of formality. On the walls are displayed such honors as the Medal of Freedom, the Order of Jamaica, and the Eisenhower Leadership Prize Medal. There are framed photographs of a ticker-tape parade down Fifth Avenue following Desert Storm; the assembled United States High Command; Quincy Jones standing with Nelson Mandela; Alma and the General with the Reagans at a White House Christmas party. Also framed is a statement of the creed by which the military live: "We mutually pledge to each other our lives, our fortune, and our sacred Honor." The most striking feature of this room, however, is a vertical row of framed photographs directly in the General's line of sight as he sits in his chair: from top to bottom, they are portraits of Presidents Reagan, Bush, and Clinton. This is the company he keeps even when he is alone: the three men whom he served in an executive capacity to defend the national interest.

The second time I visit, the General shows me the full-length basement, where he maintains a mini-museum of memorabilia. The basement is also where he has another of his home offices—a less public one. Here he follows his passionate avocation, black military history. If the office upstairs is the Fourth of July, this one is Black History Month. There is a large painting of the 10th United States Cavalry—black soldiers sent in the eighteen-seventies to battle Indians and make the West safe for white settlers. (The history and commemoration of these "Buffalo soldiers," as they were known, has been a longtime concern of Powell's.) Near it is a replica of a set of Civil War epaulets from the storied 54th Massachusetts Regiment, which consisted of black soldiers who were sent into battle against desperate odds.

Mounted on another wall is a gleaming sword collection, including specimens from the Coast Guard, West Point, the Merchant Marines Academy, and the Air Force. Then your eyes fall on a photograph of Ulysses S. Grant, dated June 1, 1864; a quotation from Lincoln ("I can make a Brigadier General in five minutes, but it is not easy to replace 110 horses"); and, taking pride of place here, a tinted photograph of Franklin Delano Roosevelt, which used to hang in Powell's parents' foyer. Six Presidents keep him company as he works, along with the century-old memorabilia of blacks willing to die for a country that steadfastly refused to acknowledge their full rights as citizens. You scan the walls and you wonder: How could this man *not* be preoccupied with running for the Presidency?

When I was growing up, in the late fifties and early sixties, black people would say "When a Negro is President," with all the awe and reverence of a born-again Christian saying "When Gabriel blows his trumpet and Jesus appears." A certain millenarian intonation, combined with the speaker's shining eyes, would force you to pause and marvel at the very idea. We knew we'd never live to see the day. "It'll be called the Black House then," the old joke would end. But if you are Colin Powell the prospect is no laughing matter. If you are Colin Powell, let's agree, you have heard a small voice inside your head repeating, like a mantra, one simple thought: You could be the first black man to be President. What does that do to you? Vernon Jor-

GERALD SCARFE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dan—political impresario, Clinton counsellor, Powell friend—says bluntly, "It's got to fuck your mind up."

Certainly the idea gives disquiet to Alma, as she makes clear on my second visit. "Soon as he would decide to run, you can bet that somebody somewhere would decide that it was his patriotic duty to shoot him," she tells me, holding a bath towel around her shoulders to cover a blue-and-white-striped bathing suit. We're in the marble foyer, waiting for the General to arrive. "But it is his decision," she adds.

There are others, too, for whom it is not a soothing prospect. "He's a phantom candidate," the Reverend Jesse Jackson snaps when I first bring up the prospect of a Powell candidacy. "We can all have positive assumptions, but we still don't know." There is a surge of ire in Jackson's voice. "We do know that very right-wing white people can trust him. They can trust him to drop bombs. We know that Reagan could trust him. Historically, there's been this search—whites always want to create the black of their choice as our leader. So for the white people this nice, clean-cut black military guy becomes something really worth selling and promoting. But have we ever seen him on a picket line? Is he for unions? Or for civil rights? Or for *anything*?" Until now, Jackson has been the soul of magnanimity—or, at least, forbearance—in his public remarks about Powell. The Reverend has been so *very* good. For the moment, his bewilderment at what he sees as Powell's free ride in the press has boiled over into outrage. He has been good long enough. "So you get some nice platitudes out of me," Jackson says, evidently marvelling at the unfairness of it all. "But, I mean, *what is this*?"

NOT a question, that, to be lightly disregarded. But, of course, we do know some things about Colin Powell. He was born in Harlem, on April 5, 1937, but grew up on Kelly Street in Hunts Point, in a South Bronx neighborhood known as Banana Kelly. His parents were both Jamaicans, who had immigrated to this country years before, and Powell owns to the complex bloodlines common among West Indians. He ticks off African, English, Irish, Scottish, Jewish, and probable Arawak Indian ancestry. It was appropriate, then, that he spent his childhood in a multi-ethnic neighborhood: the Powells' neighbors in Banana Kelly were Jewish, Irish, Polish, Italian, black, and Hispanic. Never a distinguished student, Powell did excel in his duties at the local Episcopal church, where he was an acolyte and a subdeacon. He tells me that in the ritual and the structure of the military he found "a little bit of the ritual and structure of the Episcopal Church."

That church, along with much else, is now gone. The Kelly Street of Powell's memory is as far from the Kelly Street of today as McLean is from the South Bronx. On the block of Kelly Street between Westchester Avenue and 163rd Street, near the Rafael Hernandez School, the eight-family, four-story tenement where Powell grew up has been replaced by a housing project. The ethnic mixture of the old days has been supplanted by a wave of Puerto Rican arrivals. Today, the building façades are festooned with artful graffiti, largely the work of someone who signs himself "Bio Nicer." The legends "Pepino's, P.R." and "Coquito de Puerto Rico" have been carefully lettered on the brick. The grocery store at the corner of Kelly and Westchester caters to an island palate, its bins filled with plantains and yams. It's a block where tattooed men with swollen bellies sit in folding lawn chairs or lean against buildings, drinking out of brown paper bags. The Powells don't live here anymore.

In 1956, soon after Colin Powell entered the City College of New York and its R.O.T.C. program, his father won ten thousand dollars playing the numbers and moved his family to the relative Arcadia of Elmira Avenue, in the Hollis section of Queens. Certainly that neighborhood can have changed little since the fifties. Drive from Kelly Street to Elmira Avenue today and the first thing that strikes you when you arrive is a feeling of calm and tidiness. Late-model Plymouths and Oldsmobiles and a Volvo or two fill the driveways. Only Queen Esther's Pentecostal Church and a billboard ad for Newports featuring a black man in a red-white-and-blue military uniform betray the fact that you are in a predominantly black neighborhood. The houses here are two-story red brick bungalows, distinguished from one another by different patterns of ornamental masonry. The old Powell house (the General himself sold it to the current occupants just twelve years ago) has an inset of shale and granite among the red bricks. Impatiens, hosta, forsythia, hemlock—all planted by the Powells, the woman who lives there now tells me—decorate the yard. Down the street, there are kids playing tennis. Everywhere, there are squirrels chasing squirrels. And there is quiet. Booker T. Washington, historic champion of the black working class, would have been proud.

He would also be proud of the General, whose career seems to epitomize Washington's bootstrap philosophy. And, as it happens, Powell bears an uncanny physical resemblance to the Wizard of Tuskegee. It's the same haircut, of course, but also the same sort of face—light-skinned and blunt-featured. (There are even uncanny echoes between the two men's autobiographies. Powell's boyhood account of taking a summer job mopping floors for the local Pepsi-Cola bottling plant, and doing it so skillfully that, the next summer, he was promoted to the "white" jobs, calls to mind the famous passage in "Up from Slavery" about the young Washington sweeping the floor at the Hampton Institute with such dedication that he was granted admission.) But whereas Booker T. Washington's eyes always appeared to be on the lookout for any potential black rival, Powell's face has a sort of yearbook openness. You can see why people trust him and feel comfortable around him. And you can see why Powell's military career was poised at an angle of ascent from the start, when, as an undergraduate in the R.O.T.C., he achieved the rank of cadet colonel. His narrative of those years is a succession of errors made and learned from—mistakes transmuted into maxims. In time, he was happy enough to skip the mistake part.

Though it's something of a journalistic commonplace to dismiss him as a "political general," Powell can point to two tours of active duty in Vietnam, where he incurred serious injuries and from which he returned a decorated veteran. His account of the war is a devastating indictment of high-level stupidity and low-level brutality; and he is impassioned when he describes the experience of returning to a nation buffeted by race. "While I had been off fighting for the freedom of foreigners, four little black girls had been killed by a bomb planted in Birmingham's 16th Street Baptist Church," he recalls in his memoir.

Though he heard the voices of the black-power radicals with "uneasiness," he writes that "I came to understand that a movement requires many different voices, and the tirades of the agitators were like a fire bell ringing in the night, waking up defenders of the status quo, with the message that change had better be on the way." For Powell, at least, change came swiftly: in Vietnam in 1968, the commander of the Americal Division made him operations officer.

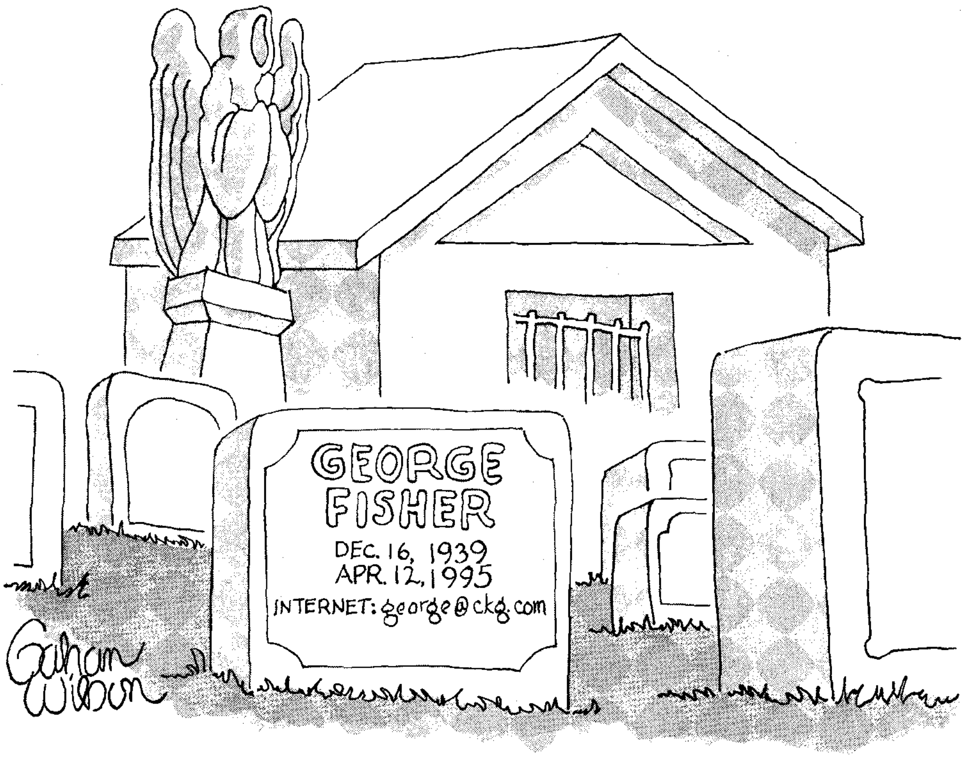
After leaving Vietnam the following year, Powell enrolled in a graduate program at George Washington University. The once-indifferent student earned his Master of Business Administration with mostly A's. Soon he found himself in the White House Fellows Program, where he caught the notice of Caspar Weinberger and Frank Carlucci, the two men who so profoundly shaped his later career. In the meantime, he learned a thing or two about the White House bureaucracy, which meant picking up more maxims: "You don't know what you can get away with until you try." "Never get into fights with people who buy ink by the barrel." When Clifford Alexander was installed, in 1977, as Secretary of the Army—the only black man ever to hold the position—he tripled the number of black generals. "My method was simple," Alexander says. "I just told everyone that I would not sign the goddam [promotion] list unless it was fair." Among the beneficiaries of Secretary Alexander's aggressive new policy was Colin Powell, who achieved the rank of general at the age of forty-two.

In 1980, he cast his vote for Ronald Reagan; and three years later Reagan, in a manner of speaking, returned the favor. In 1983, with Weinberger ensconced as Secretary of Defense and Carlucci as his deputy, Powell was brought in from the field to be their valued point man and gatekeeper. From Reagan's Secretary of the Navy, John Lehman, came another maxim: "Power corrupts; but absolute power is really neat." When Carlucci was made Reagan's National Security Adviser, he insisted that Powell join him in revamping the National Security Council, which had been shaken up by the damaging revelations of the Iran-Contra scandal. Ten months later, on November 20, 1987, Powell himself was given the job of National Security Adviser. "If it hadn't been for Iran-Contra," he says, "I'd still be an obscure general somewhere. Retired, never heard of."

In the West Wing, Powell had the chance to refine his philosophy of action. "The key is not to make quick decisions, but to make timely decisions," he writes. "I have a timing formula, P = 40 to 70, in which P stands for probability of success and the numbers indicate the percentage of information acquired. I don't act if I have only enough information to give me a less than forty percent chance of being right. And I don't wait until I have enough facts to be 100 percent sure of being right, because by then it is almost always too late." In 1989, the new Secretary of Defense, Dick Cheney, supported by President Bush, decided to catapult Colin Powell into the position of Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. We do not know the algorithm by which they reached the decision, but they did not regret it. The rest is not history, yet, but something closer to "current events."

People whose résumés read like Powell's are sometimes liked but not respected; sometimes respected but not liked. But if you talk to Powell's remarkably wide range of acquaintances, on and off the record, you will hear tributes that sound altogether heartfelt and unrehearsed. They say he is a "regular brother," a "mensch," "good people." He inspires loyalty even among those who aren't under his command. Vernon Jordan tells me of something that happened last year when he was hospitalized: "He came to see me every day. And he didn't just, you know, breeze in and breeze out—he did some porch-sitting with me. The look on his face of worry and concern was very real. And he did not just come when I was in the hospital, he came after I got home.

Colin and Alma Powell. She is widely viewed as a substantial political asset, someone who is at home with power, her own and others'. (Photograph by Harry Benson.)



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He is no sunshine soldier when it comes to friendship.” Warming to the subject of Powell’s family-mindedness, Jordan tells me of his own mother. She had worked as a cook in the Officers’ Club at Fort McPherson since the segregated days of the early nineteen-forties; so it was a matter of personal gratification when Powell took charge of U.S. Forces Command at the fort in 1989. Jordan describes a party that he threw that same year for his mother’s eighty-second birthday, which Colin Powell attended. He remembers Powell telling him, “This is what it is ultimately all about—family.” When Jordan adds, “And I will be there for him,” it sounds like a solemn vow. Of course, Jordan makes it clear that his partisan fealty belongs to Clinton and the Democratic Party. He’s talking not about political allegiances but about personal ones.

A theme that recurs when friends talk about Powell is that he is a “regular brother.” Jordan explains, “You do not have to hang out on the corner to be a brother. That’s No. 1. No. 2 is, you don’t ask peers whether or not a guy is a regular brother. You ask the other brothers whether he is regular or not. You ask the guys at the airport, you ask the shoeshine boy. You ask the taxicab guy. And they will tell you he is a good man.” Over the past few months, I *have* asked them, by the dozen, and they do tell you that. To use a word that keeps coming up, they’re *proud* of him. Quincy Jones, the musician and producer, and Kurt Schmoke, the black mayor of Baltimore, told me independently about going with Colin Powell to South Africa, where he sang doo-wop and Motown tunes—accompanied by a chorus of South African youth. Not only that but when I ask him to do the Camel Walk the General gets up from his chair and does his best to perform James Brown’s now classic dance. Jordan says, “The notion that he is not a regular brother is bullshit.”

As the author (with Joseph E. Persico) of “My American Journey,” a book whose advance orders alone guarantee it an impressive début on the best-seller list, Colin Powell is now courting a wider celebrity. He makes it clear that writing the book presented a dilemma: how to achieve candor without the appearance of disloyalty. He has, by and large, brought it off. Though he describes Weinberger’s “little quirks,” his “Captain Queeg talisman,” his “taste for pomp”—and though he seems, in the end, to be more comfortable with the policy perspectives of Weinberger’s foe, George P. Shultz—the account of his great mentor is unmistakably admiring. He rates Bush highly as a commander, but he found his demeanor toward the end of his Presidency so baffling as to invite a medical explanation. (Powell says, “The President calling someone a bozo? You can’t do that. But the only way I could see writing it—because I’m not a medical expert—was to pose it as a rhetorical question.”) And while his portrayal of President Reagan is clearly of someone who is worrisomely out of touch, it is imbued with almost filial affection. “I had trouble with the Reagan chapters,” he explains, “because I have a loving relationship with him and had to be honest without being hurtful.”

He also acknowledges another kind of discomfort presented by his involvement with the Reagan and Bush Administrations. “When I was a young lieutenant I would have commanders come up to me and say, ‘Powell, you’re doing great—God damn, you’re the best black lieutenant I’ve ever seen,’ ” Powell recalls. “And I’d say, ‘Thank you.’ Just file it away.” It was good practice for his years in the White House as far as racial politics were concerned. “The problem with Reagan and Bush and Weinberger and their ilk is that they just never knew,” Powell says, almost wistfully. “They were never sensitized to it. They never had to live with it. They were never close to it. And the cold political calculus is that the Republicans said, ‘We can’t get these people, so why spend a dime trying?’ Even though Reagan and Bush are two of the closest people in my life, I’ve got to say that this was an area where I found them wanting. This was a difficult thing to write about in the book.” He removes his photograph of Reagan from the wall and shows it to me. On it Reagan had written, in his neat, round cursive hand, “If you say so, Colin, it must be right.” Powell says, “Just read it—this is from the President of the United States. And so now I’m going to turn around and say he’s a racist?”

Powell tells me of an episode when Carlucci, as Reagan’s National Security Adviser, sent him to see Senator Jesse Helms about a policy matter, and Helms later mentioned to Carlucci that he’d “listened to that black general you sent up here.” Powell glosses, “See, now, Jesse just don’t know any other way to see folks. As cordial as Jesse and I are now—and we will go out on yachts together, we’ll say nice things to each other—if you think Jesse can ever see me as anything other than a black general . . ." Powell shakes his head. "Then we'd have arrived. But we ain't arrived."

THE most famous black President of this century is one Douglass Dilman: he is the hero of "The Man," a 1964 best-selling novel by Irving Wallace, which was later made into a movie starring James Earl Jones. Thrust into the Oval Office after a crisis of succession, President Dilman swiftly finds himself the target of popular animosity and Beltway intrigue. He's a man of conscience and competence, but humiliation awaits him at every turn. Half the people he invites to his first big state dinner fail to show. More nefariously, he is ensnared in a trumped-up sex scandal. His enemies seize the opportunity to begin impeachment hearings, and the Southern senator in charge of them tells him gravely, "I must decide . . . whether you acted wisely or unwisely as a President, and whether you acted as an American President or as a Negro President."

An American President or a Negro President? Though the question doesn't pose itself so starkly these days, it hasn't altogether disappeared. Powell, for one, has made his own decision on the matter. "I really don't want to be elected to be the first black American President," he tells me. "I don't want to be the poster child for the brothers, or for guilty white liberals. That would not be true to the image I have of myself."

Nor would it be true to the image that others have of him. His mentor Caspar Weinberger tells me that he doesn't see a black man when he sees Powell. "Quite a few people have talked to me recently about whether America's ready to accept a black candidate," he says. "I don't think that would be a factor at all if he should enter the Presidential race. There are probably a few people left who would still be troubled by it, but I think it could be far less than one per cent. The fact of the matter is that with Colin I never think of whether he's black or white or anything else."

Vernon Jordan, as a longtime veteran of the civil-rights movement, resists Weinberger's formulation. "Any time a white person says they do not see Colin Powell as black, that tells me that they cannot see," he says wearily. "What they are really saying is 'We see that he is black but we are prepared to look beyond that.' " Earl Graves, the black businessman and publisher of the magazine *Black Enterprise*, is more acerbic on the subject: "It's an affront to me when you say that, because that means that if you saw him as a black person you couldn't vote for him."

Still, there are black activists and intellectuals who wonder if the key to Powell's success may be that he is, in a phrase of the black writer Jill Nelson's, "the un-Negro." Julian Bond, the black civil-rights activist and former Georgia state legislator whose name was among those proposed for the Vice-Presidential nomination at the 1968 Democratic National Convention, develops this point: "I think first his uniform—braid, the medals—insulated him from race. Now it's in his carriage, his manner: even when he's out of uniform, even when he's in a blue serge suit, he's in uniform. You put Colin Powell and any other Mr. Black Man up there, and it becomes just that—it's Colin Powell and Mr. Black Man." Then there's the voice. "Probably because of his island heritage, he has a kind of diction that isn't black American. He's verbally not black." His podium style follows suit, Bond says. "It's just straight-ahead talking. It's almost Reaganesque—there's a kind of formal intimacy, a sense that he's speaking directly to you. There's none of that call-and-response, none of that 'Can I have just a minute more?' preacher stuff."

The racial iconography of Colin Powell goes beyond style to substance, according to the black political scientist Ronald Walters, who was Jesse Jackson's deputy campaign manager in 1984. "He doesn't speak in a racial language and therefore he's not threatening to whites," Walters says. "Right now we're having a discussion about racial mobility in American society—about things like civil rights and affirmative action. But underneath is the anger of many whites who believe that if blacks would only buckle down and play by the rules they could make it. And Powell then becomes a symbol of that—the whites' answer to the angry blacks who say racism is still here. That makes him part of this discussion, even though he hasn't engaged in it." Jesse Jackson—who eloquently indicts the supposed ideal of "color blind-

"I knew it was love when I stopped grading him."

ness" as an alibi for turning a blind eye to the social inequities of race—offers something more aphoristic. "It's not so much a problem that Weinberger says he doesn't see a black man when he sees Powell—and he *does*. It's important that Powell sees a black man when he shaves, and he does."

Ask Powell about the way he has come to be seen as a paragon of something like racial erasure, and it's clear that he has given the matter some thought. "One, I don't shove it in their face, you know?" he says. "I don't bring any stereotypes or threatening visage to their presence. Some black people do. Two, I can overcome any stereotypes or reservations they have, because I perform well. Third thing is, *I ain't that black*." He talks about interracial social skills, skills that he fears are deficient in too many blacks. "I speak reasonably well, like a white person," he says. "I am very comfortable in a white social situation, and I don't go off in a corner. My features are clearly black, and I've never denied what I am. It fits into their general social setting, so they do not find me threatening." He pauses. "I think there's more to it than that, but I don't know what it is."

According to Bruce Llewellyn, a cousin and business partner of Powell's—and an entrepreneur whom Powell proudly describes as "one of the country's wealthiest African-Americans"—Powell's "nonthreatening" personality helps. "Have you ever heard his speeches?" Llewellyn, a formidable grizzly bear of a man, wants to know. "He gives a great speech. He gets all them white people coming up off the chairs, clapping and feeling good about themselves. He talks about America, the great land of opportunity, and how a poor West Indian kid with Jamaican parents and living in the South Bronx can work his way to be the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff."

"An all-American story," I put in.

"They all love this shit," he says, with a characteristic mixture of candor and acumen. "They all love the idea that 'Gee, we weren't prejudiced. A good man came, and we gave him his shot.' White people love to believe they're fair. One of the things that upsets the living shit out of them is when you confront them with the fact that they are really a bunch of racist, no-good motherfuckers." Llewellyn contrasts Powell's wholesome appeal with what he takes to be Jesse Jackson's forte—inspiring fear. "Jesse scares white people, because he really sounds like a fiery zealot, like he might just jump up and say 'Fuck you!' and hit you in the mouth. They really are afraid that Jesse can create violence, make people want to attack you with a baseball bat, or whatever. He missed his calling. What Jesse should be is our business shakedown artist." Llewellyn's tone is not unadmiring; he means this as a constructive suggestion. Though he is a former member of the Carter Administration, he has little patience for the pieties of public discourse. This is a man who is accustomed to being in charge of his own affairs and to speaking his own mind. Later, I mention to the General something that Llewellyn had said, and he interjects, in a tone of exaggerated annoyance, "Goddam Bruce—I told him to shut up." He explains, with mock gruffness, "I put him in a closet, because he was talking to everybody."

Still, Llewellyn is far from alone in seeing the contrasts between Powell and Jackson as not only instructive but emblematic. Representative Ron Dellums told Powell that, compared to Jesse Jackson, he was a "jelly maker, not a tree shaker." It's an analysis from which Powell, who speaks of Jackson with more amusement than animosity, does not exactly demur. In the words of one member of the Powell camp, "Jesse has a horrible problem. I mean, he is no longer the No. 1 Negro in this country."

THE offices of the National Rainbow Coalition, in Washington, D.C., are modestly appointed but ample in size. My appointment with Jackson is at five o'clock; not unexpectedly, Jackson is running late, by about a half hour. The office I wait in is crowded with stacks of old newspapers, a copier, and a large paper shredder that bears a sign reading "Ollie and Fawn." Over the past several weeks, I've brought up Powell with almost every black person I've spoken to. Jackson's press secretary at the Coalition, Theresa Caldwell, turns out to be effusive on the subject: "He's every-black-person-looking. In fact, without the uniform he looks like my cousin Bobby. He's the best of us in a lot of ways."

Jackson, who, at fifty-three, is five years Powell's junior, is more restrained and statesmanlike today than he was when we spoke earlier. Still, the figure recently erected by the newsweekly pundits—Powell, political panacea—has clearly been on his mind of late. "The fact is that a black is capable of being a conduit for racist positions," he tells me. "But skin color becomes a fig leaf, so if a black is elected on that premise, and you've chosen ethnicity over ethics, that's a big mistake."

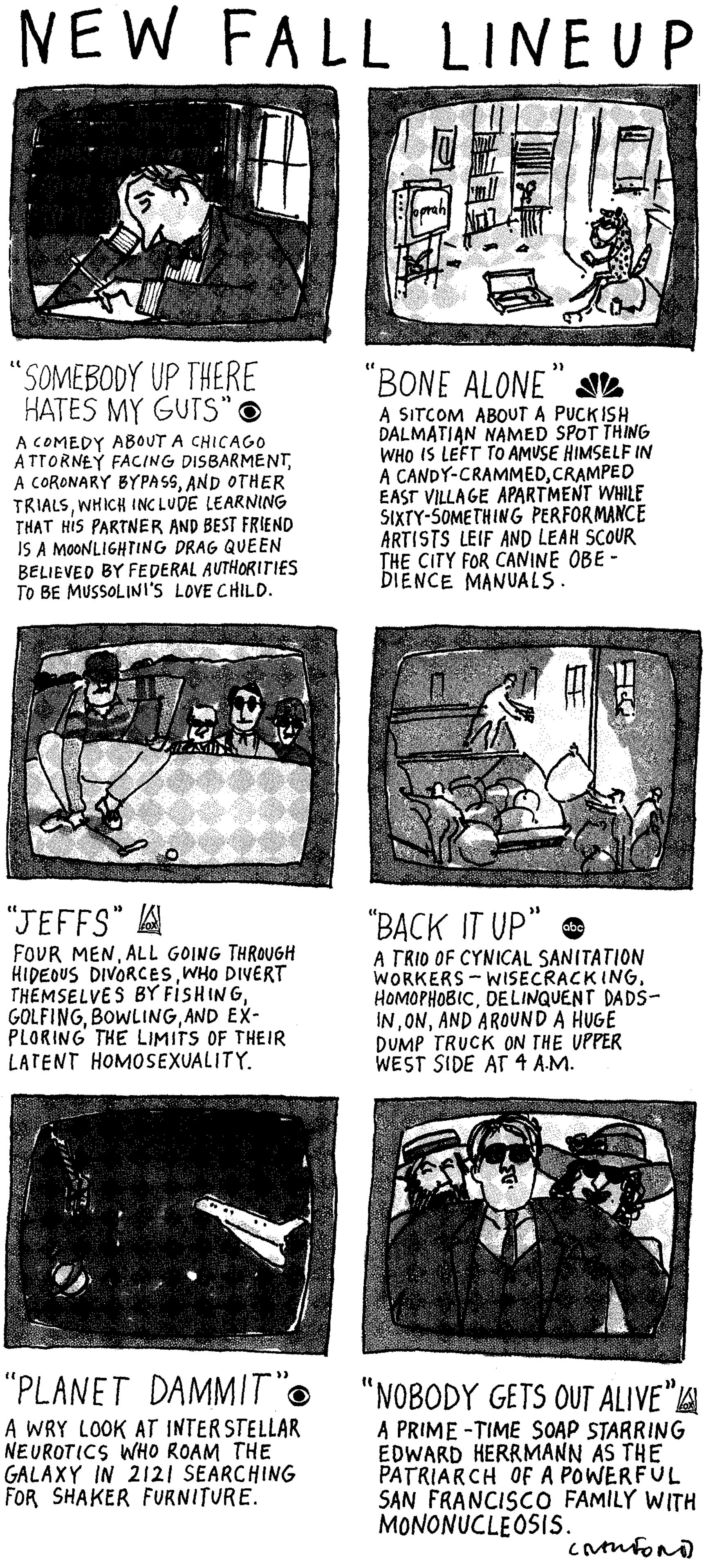
Watching him light into the topic reminds you that the tradition of African-American leadership has tended to divide into contrasting couples: there's an Esau for every Jacob. The elegant ex-slave Frederick Douglass faced the militant-nationalist Henry Highland Garnet, the radical W. E. B. Du Bois faced the mainstream power broker Booker T. Washington, and the integrationist Martin Luther King, Jr., faced the separatist Malcolm X. But never before have two such rivals played out their fraternal drama in the arena of American electoral politics.

With all the obviousness of a stage set, their offices telegraph their differences. On Jackson's walls hang *his* heroes—Aristide, Mandela, and, of course, Dr. King. And then there is the matter of style, both personal and public. Powell quotes Michael Korda and Clausewitz; Jackson quotes the Bible. Powell's origins are urban; Jackson's are rural. Powell talks like a schoolmaster; Jackson talks like the Holy Ghost. Indeed, Jackson's voice is black from the first syllable, and his cadences are those of a long black preacherly tradition. Powell, as he himself says, speaks "like a white person." "When Jesse walks into a room, white people hear some sad-eyed Negro spiritual," one black politician told me. "When Powell walks in, they hear 'The Star-Spangled Banner' and 'God Bless America.' " Only their participation in the theatre of Presidential politics unites the two. But it divides them as well. Jackson sought to be the first black President. Powell would like to be the first President who happens to be black.

To take the measure of what Powell represents to Jackson, you have to look again at what Jackson himself represented to American politics. I remember newspaper accounts published the day after Jesse Jackson's setback in the 1988 Wisconsin primary. The gist was that, to judge by surveys, a majority of white voters went to sleep declaring that they would vote for a black man to be President but woke up realizing that they couldn't bring themselves to do it. Yet those who thought the Jackson campaign had failed missed what was really going on. Jackson's masterstroke was his use of the Democratic primaries—and his accompanying push for voter registration—as a referendum *within the African-American community* about who would inherit King's mantle. Never mind the delegate count: in 1988, Jesse Jackson was elected President of black America. His term has not lasted as long as he might have liked. Analyzing Jackson's relation to Powell, Vernon Jordan says, "It is probably the same way George Bush felt in 1992. There is no right guaranteeing a position of leadership, an opportunity to run for office or to lead an organization, that somebody holds forever." He adds delicately, "But that does not keep people from feeling that way."

There is, surely, another fundamental difference between the two men. Jesse Jackson's Presidential race was, in essence, the courting of a symbol, and, as such, is representative of a movement where symbolism has long been in the ascendancy. I don't think that Jackson ever truly imagined himself in the Oval Office, except as a visitor. But few doubt that Colin Powell has. Powell—invariably tagged with the journalistic cliché "consummate insider"—has had the opportunity to witness at first hand the executive styles of Ronald Reagan, George Bush, and Bill Clinton; and if the job evaluations he has provided of his three bosses are far from dismissive, they are decidedly not overawed. He recounts their processes of decision-making in the spirit of one who means to learn from their mistakes. To Powell, whose responsibilities have ranged from planning wars to devising the first systematic reduction in the size of the military since the Second World War, the White House is an extension of a system of levers and pulleys he has helped design. No other black American has been such an integral part of the structures and processes of power.

Jackson, seated at his desk, cufflinks gleaming in the afternoon sun, offers his own analysis of how he and Powell differ. Powell represents the dominant culture, he believes, while he himself represents an oppositional culture; Powell has been "pushed along by a tailwind," as he puts it, while he has been "facing a headwind." Powell is "flowing with the culture," he says, whereas "so much of


NEW FALL LINEUP
oprah
"SOMEBODY UP THERE HATES MY GUTS"
A COMEDY ABOUT A CHICAGO ATTORNEY FACING DISBARMENT, A CORONARY BYPASS, AND OTHER TRIALS, WHICH INCLUDE LEARNING THAT HIS PARTNER AND BEST FRIEND IS A MOONLIGHTING DRAG QUEEN BELIEVED BY FEDERAL AUTHORITIES TO BE MUSSOLINI'S LOVE CHILD.
"BONE ALONE"
A SITCOM ABOUT A PUCKISH DALMATIAN NAMED SPOT THING WHO IS LEFT TO AMUSE HIMSELF IN A CANDY-CRAMMED, CRAMPED EAST VILLAGE APARTMENT WHILE SIXTY-SOMETHING PERFORMANCE ARTISTS LEIF AND LEAH SCOUR THE CITY FOR CANINE OBEDIENCE MANUALS.
"JEFFS"
FOUR MEN, ALL GOING THROUGH HIDEOUS DIVORCES, WHO DIVERT THEMSELVES BY FISHING, GOLFING, BOWLING, AND EXPLORING THE LIMITS OF THEIR LATENT HOMOSEXUALITY.
"BACK IT UP"
A TRIO OF CYNICAL SANITATION WORKERS – WISECRACKING, HOMOPHOBIC, DELINQUENT DADS – IN, ON, AND AROUND A HUGE DUMP TRUCK ON THE UPPER WEST SIDE AT 4 A.M.
"PLANET DAMMIT"
A WRY LOOK AT INTERSTELLAR NEUROTICS WHO ROAM THE GALAXY IN 2121 SEARCHING FOR SHAKER FURNITURE.
"NOBODY GETS OUT ALIVE"
A PRIME-TIME SOAP STARRING EDWARD HERRMANN AS THE PATRIARCH OF A POWERFUL SAN FRANCISCO FAMILY WITH MONONUCLEOSIS.
CRAWFORD

my work, so much of Dr. King's work, is countercultural." Jackson warms to his subject: "And those who go with the counterculture either die early or live on, despised. If you preach against sexism, against racism, against worker exploitation, you're going with the counterculture, and who is it you're going up against except the publishers, the bankers, the image-makers, the military, the government? Now, there is always a tendency of this society to try to position people they feel comfortable with, and what's amazing about Powell is he's created a comfort zone among the guardians of the culture. How long the right wing would express admiration if he took principled positions to their logical conclusion no one knows. But we do know that the same group that said to Jesus 'Hosanna, Hosanna' not long after that was saying 'Crucify him, crucify him.' And the same thing is already starting to happen to Powell."

"Would it surprise you to know that Powell once thought about becoming an Episcopal priest?" I ask. I'm thinking of Powell's remarks about the similarities between the two institutions.

"No," Jackson says. "Would it surprise you to know that if I hadn't won my scholarship I was going to join the Air Force?" But Jackson *has* taken the path that Powell passed by. Right now he is riffling through his Bible. Earlier, a black politician said to me, "It's very peculiar: Jackson feels that Powell has somehow *taken something* from him." Try a birthright. It is not the story of Jacob and Esau that is today's text, however, but the story of Daniel, Mishael, and Azariah. "It's really very basic," Jackson says, and begins reading from the Book of Daniel: " 'In the third year of the reign of Jehoiakim king of Judah came Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon unto Jerusalem, and besieged it.' And the king ordered Ashpenaz as chief of his court officials to bring him some of the Israelites—the invaded people, the ghetto people—from the leadership class: young men without any physical defect, handsome, showing aptitude for every kind of learning, qualified to serve in the king's palace. He was to teach them the language and culture of the Babylonians."

I'm beginning to get the picture: an élite siphoned off and coöpted by the ruling culture. Jackson goes on, "The king assigned them a daily amount of food and wine from his table. They were to be trained for three years and after that they were to enter the king's service." He looks up and says, "In other words, take them away from their culture, send them to Harvard, send them to Yale, send them to the military." Then he reads again: " 'Now among these were the children of Judah, Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah. But Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself with the portion of the king's meat.' " Jackson explains, "Daniel resolved not to defile himself—he went counterculture, and so forth. What I'm talking about is this way of taking people from their culture, getting a certain select group—get Gates, get Powell, get Cornel West, get whomever. Get . . ."

"Jesse," I propose.

He is having none of it. "But Jesse, like Daniel, *purposed not to defile himself*," he says, and he gives me a stern look. "By now, I could be on all kinds of boards. But I choose to transform the culture, not to conform to it." The Reverend returns to the Good Book. "The big social issue here to me is not the three boys passing the religious test and God coming and rescuing them in some miraculous way. The big issue is: What about the *rest* of them? What about those who were never chosen in the first place?"

"It's not that we had more fun before we got married—it's just that now we're having a different kind of fun."

To forge a career as a military man is not to be defiled, exactly; rather, it is to reject the vocabulary of defilement. And the military is more than Powell's day job. It is an integral part of his identity. His military career has created a circle of loyalists, and the odd detractor. Surprisingly, Clifford Alexander, whose term as Secretary of the Army makes him as responsible as anyone for Powell's career trajectory, seems less than pleased with the result: "Was Colin Powell exceptional? No. There were a number of black generals who were equally as good as Colin Powell. But the breaks were with Powell. By working in the Pentagon, he was visible to the Republican leadership. And Colin, who is smart and competent, did quite well, in part because of the proximity." In Alexander's view, Powell "is now in the hands of the handlers." He tries to take the long view. Echoing Jackson, he says, "You see, this has been pulled on us many times. White America says, 'This is your new leader, and you ought to feel good about it.' " It appears that Alexander does not feel good about it.

Then, too, both Powell's record as a commander and his views on military engagement have been controversial.

Two books, "The Commanders," by Bob Woodward, and "The Generals' War," by General Bernard E. Trainor and Michael R. Gordon, chiselled away at Powell's reputation as the helmsman of the Gulf War. The first depicted him as a reluctant warrior, who cautioned against military intervention until the die was finally cast. The second took him to task for pursuing what its authors considered a faulty endgame to the conflict—one that left Saddam Hussein's regime and military might essentially intact and able to threaten future belligerence. Both accounts have been disputed, by Powell and others. What has greater currency, however, is the unapologetic stand he has taken against intervention in the Bosnian crisis.

"The biggest mistake was recognizing all these little countries when they started to decide they were independent," Powell says, leaning back in his chair. "The Serbs had very good reason to be worried about being in a Muslim-dominated country. It wasn't just paranoia. When the fighting broke out, should the West have intervened militarily as one of the belligerents to put down all other belligerents? There was no Western leader who was willing to say, 'I have a vital interest in the outcome of this conflict.' Nobody really thinks it has a vital interest." What has become known as the Powell Doctrine cautions against military involvement where political objectives remain murky. Now, three weeks into the current allied air campaign, Powell says, "I'm pleased there is some progress. But we could have gotten these terms three years ago—in fact, we could have gotten better terms."

So Powell is wary of overseas commitments and sees nothing in Bosnia to tempt him to change course. "Bismarck once said that all the Balkans were not worth the life of one Pomeranian grenadier," Powell said when we talked in July. "The man knew what he was talking about. Disraeli said something similar." The national animadversions of nineteenth-century statesmen aside, Powell also has serious tactical misgivings. Speaking a few weeks before the allied air strikes began, Powell made clear his skepticism of the ultimate efficacy of such efforts. "We can bomb—but what will we accomplish? Tito spent forty years building this military infrastructure so that it couldn't be bombed by the Red Air Force. This stuff is underground. Take out the artillery? This isn't like Desert Storm. You have hills, you have trees. You have a civilian population, you have churches, you have homes, you have schools, and they can park all that artillery right next to any of that stuff, and you can't bomb it. As a culture, the Air Force tends to say we can do all kinds of wonderful things. But not to a dispersed enemy in wooded, hilly terrain which has the ability to shoot back. We bombed the hell out of Vietnam and never did stop anything on the Ho Chi Minh Trail. Bush understood that. But we've now said, 'No, we're going to bomb,' and what are the reasons? NATO credibility? You don't bomb people for credibility. We have repeatedly gotten in trouble thinking that the use of military force is for the purpose of being seen as having done something. You should use military force for achieving a specific military purpose that is linked to the achievement of a specific political purpose and goal." This conclusion is a fairly precise statement of the Powell Doctrine—a "doctrine" being what happens to a maxim when it serves as the basis of military policy.

We're on opposite sides of the issue, and, needless to say, he has heard my arguments many times before. But still: even beyond the enormities in view, what about the precedent we're setting for the next century—the implicit license our inaction confers on other attempts at "ethnic cleansing"? What kind of signals are we sending?

"I think you ought to send a clear signal: that we're not going to get involved in this war, and it's not going to end until people are tired of fighting one another. If you say that every day, the Muslims will know it and the Serbs will know it, and there will be no confusion. But for three years we've been giving these mixed signals so the signals are worthless, and therefore we are weakened and cheapened in the eyes of the world. We have a very bad reputation around the world now as an incontinent political entity. And it's hurt the President badly and it's hurt his statesmanship really badly. But what are the long-term consequences? I really don't think the people in places like Azerbaijan or Armenia or Liberia or Sierra Leone are calibrating their actions on the basis of what we do in Bosnia." He gives me a wry look when he says, "There are some people at that school you hang out at"—he means Harvard, where I teach—"who contribute nothing else to the national G.D.P. except to create these great schemes." Powell worries that there are certain essentials that get lost in the ozone of theory. "I believe in the bully's way of going to war," he says. " 'I'm on the street corner, I got my gun, I got my blade, *I'ma kick yo' ass.*' " He adds, "There was a paragraph like this in the early draft of the book, but it sounded a little too, shall we say, 'ethnic,' and a little too Bronx, so I took it out."

Annoying as he finds the Ivy League technocrats on this issue, Powell has even less time for some of my co-religionists in the press. "William Safire and Tony Lewis say this will only take a little bit of bombing and it will work. No historical precedent exists for such a position. And Safire drives me to distraction. Sometimes, because he starts down this logic trail, and every time he gets trapped he just says, 'Air power can do it.' Forget it. The technology isn't that good. Safire's outrageous: 'There's no doubt in anyone's mind that if we'd done this three years ago . . . ' Bullshit, Bill. But he does that. He's getting increasingly arrogant in his old age." Still, you wonder if in allowing a maxim to become a doctrine Powell hasn't courted a paradox—that of raising pragmatism to a principle. Extremism in pursuit of moderation may be no virtue.

But Powell has a redoubtable gift for charming his opponents, even on deeply felt concerns. At the Harvard commencement two years ago, I saw this gift in action. Long before the issue of gays in the military surfaced to electoral consciousness, Powell had been selected to receive an honorary degree and to give a commencement address; but the eventual salience of the debate, and Powell's well-known opposition to lifting the ban, made his appearance a matter of heated controversy on campus. The mayor of Cambridge, Kenneth Reeves, recalls introducing himself to Powell earlier in his visit. "I said, 'General Powell, it is my great pleasure to welcome you to Cambridge. I am the mayor of Cambridge, and in Cambridge the mayor happens to be both black and a homosexual, and this homosexual is going to keep you safe all day long.' " He laughs. "The secret to

Colin Powell, I found, is that he is disarmingly charming."

Just before the General was to speak before a wary crowd of twenty thousand, the graduate students' speaker delivered an impassioned and eloquent attack on his position and was loudly applauded for it. How would Powell respond? As the student was returning to her seat, Powell rose, walked over to her, and shook her hand, thanking her for her comments. A Cambridge crowd—inconceivably remote from the military ethos—cheered him, won over by the graciousness of his gesture. When we discussed the matter recently, Powell cautioned, "I never presented the case in terms of there being something wrong, morally, or any other way, with gays. I just couldn't figure out a way to handle the privacy aspect." And I can't figure out what those privacy aspects are in the first place. What's plain is that the "don't ask, don't tell" compromise receives his imprimatur in part because it *is* a compromise, and Powell is a man who believes in the golden middle.

Not surprisingly, when I ask him to contrast the military-decision-making styles of the three Presidents he advised—Reagan, Bush, and Clinton—he tells me that Bush "had the clearest sense of how to marry political objectives and military force." He tells a story about a small naval skirmish with Iranians that broke out in the Persian Gulf when he was Reagan's National Security Adviser. Reagan's approval was needed to widen the rules of engagement, and when Powell went to him with the request he found the President sitting at his desk signing photographs of himself. "Within a nanosecond after I got out the last phrase of my request to him, he said, 'Yes, do it, give 'em hell,' " Powell recalls. It was, he says, "vintage Reagan." Clinton, he guesses, "would have talked about it a lot more and would have been, minute by minute, into the details." As for Bush, he "was somewhere in between." Bush and his advisers would have asked a few questions about the whys and wherefores, but "we would have gotten the same quick answer," Powell says. "With Clinton, I suspect it might have taken a little bit longer."

TO the chagrin of many Powell-for-President enthusiasts, Powell's own decision-making process has been displaying more deliberateness than

AT THE MUSEUMS

JAMES DEAN

JAMES DEAN did not mean much to me when I was growing up. He was too directly linked to Hollywood's morality-obsessed films of the fifties, and by the seventies, when I saw the three films he had starred in—"East of Eden," "Giant," and the unsurpassable "Rebel Without a Cause"—he was an icon too tarnished by nostalgia, his work overwhelmed and cheapened by the ready availability of his image and his myth in Times Square tourist traps, where, along with Marilyn and Elvis, he loomed large and ghostly pale, in watercolors meant to evoke Hollywood's celestial past.

For me, those kitsch images of Dean brought to mind the aura of religious idolatry in which bad artists sheathed J.F.K. As one who is prone to being a fan, I prefer not to be force-fed latter-day saints; part of the excitement of being a fan is discovering the star who speaks to your soul, in the dark, alone, without commercial interruption.

Like most distinctive film actors, Dean could project the illusion of solitude in front of the camera. He could also project a petulant self-absorption that was difficult for me to take but not difficult for me to understand: his actor's discipline gave him access to the turbulence of youth. Unlike Marlon Brando and Montgomery Clift—who together were Dean's great god Thespis—he didn't have to learn how to act for film; he was more or less reared in front of the camera, appearing in more than twenty television plays. To commemorate the fortieth anniversary of his death, the Museum of Television and Radio will be screening many of those plays, now through March 10th, as part of its "James Dean on Television: A Myth in the Making." Dean was twenty-four when he died. Through the magic of television, he is still at the beginning of his career, passionate about his craft.

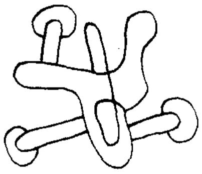
—HILTON ALS

PHOTOGRAPH BY
PHIL STERN

James Dean, Hollywood, 1955.

speed this year. How, for that matter, would the maxims of a lifetime in the military translate into the political arena? Timing, readiness, the calculation of odds: these things enter equally into military and political campaigns. But the political arena presents questions that do not arise in the armed forces. To begin with, a military commander seldom has to decide whose side he will join. Powell, though a registered independent, came of age politically in Republican Administrations and cast votes for Reagan and Bush. "If I were to decide to enter politics and run for the Presidency," he told Barbara Walters, "the easiest way to do it, I think, would be as a Republican. It would probably be more of an issue of me making compromises than it would be for the Republican Party making compromises, if we're talking about 1995-96."

Will he make those compromises? Certainly Powell's relations with the black political establishment, such as it is, have sometimes been strained. He is sensitive to the hazards of criticizing black leadership ("They will jump in your face in a minute") but is undeterred by them. He views the left-listing congressional Black Caucus as a phenomenon of resegregation; it's collectively in thrall to "the redistricting of these little squirrelly black districts all over," he says. "That gives us more black congressmen, but with less power and less influence." Nor, by his reckoning, have they been eager to take responsibility for risky policies they've helped to initiate.



The Black Caucus has often sought to make American policy more sensitive to Third World concerns; racial solidarity is meant to extend beyond national boundaries. And Powell himself is not immune to the mystique of origins. He has spoken of his first visit to West Africa as a profoundly moving experience—one that reinforced his sense of an ancestral identity. "I am an African, too," he has declared. Still, his attitude toward African nations does not exactly brim with sentimentality. "We have nations in Africa that are going backward in time hundreds of years," he asserts. "They are abandoning their colonial heritage, which was sort of the passage into the twentieth century." General Abacha, the despotic ruler of Nigeria, incurs sharp disapproval—"He has the worst C.I.A. bio I've ever read, and I've read lots of them"—but then so do his subjects: "Nigeria is a nation of ninety million people. With enormous wealth. And what they could have done with that wealth over the last twenty years—they just pissed it away. They just tend not to be honest. Nigerians as a group, frankly, are marvellous scammers. I mean, it is in their national culture." So the General, to say the least, cannot be accused of knee-jerk Afrocentrism.

And yet Powell's fit with the Reagan revolution was clearly imperfect. On the one hand, he was grateful for its invigorating effect on the military, which he felt had been undervalued by Carter. On the other hand, Powell is someone for whom the adjective "right-wing" is not a positive designation; someone for whom the adjective "middle-of-the-road" is no pejorative. And though most of his political friends are Republicans, many are not. Representative Kweisi Mfume, the outspoken former leader of the congressional Black Caucus, might be expected to provide a voice of dissent, but he turns out to be an ardent booster. "General Powell is the best that we can be," he says. Would he support him? "I was at his house a week ago and I told him that whenever he decided, please count me among the persons he would call first," Representative Mfume replies. "We shook on it. That says it all."

Certainly the issue of affirmative action seems to be something of a wedge between Powell and many of his Republican friends. When he's in a formal mood, he carefully distinguishes between quotas and "equal opportunity," and discourses upon the wrongful conflation of the two. But he can also bring a certain fervor to the topic. "It's amazing how affirmative action has suddenly become Issue No. 1. One of my Republican friends had the nerve to send me one of their newsletters a few weeks ago saying that we had to get rid of affirmative action because we couldn't keep putting these programs in place for allegations of 'vague and ancient wrongs.' I almost went crazy. I said, Vague? Vague? Denny's wouldn't serve four black Secret Service agents guarding the President of the United States. The Chicago Federal Reserve Bank just told us something that any black could have told you—that it's harder to get a loan if you're black than if you're white. And we got Pete Wilson out there saying that affirmative action is bad because there are eight-tenths of one per cent more black students in the University of California school system as a result of fifteen years of affirmative action. This is the worst problem the country has? And I said, 'If there is a program that is a "get over" program, then get rid of it, sure.' But don't throw out the baby with the bathwater."

I mention the F.C.C. program granting minority set-asides of television and radio stations. He's intimately acquainted with it: it enabled him, in partnership with Bruce Llewellyn and others, to acquire a Buffalo television station ten years ago. "But it's black-owned," he says. "If you got a bunch of white guys with a brother fronting for them, get rid of it. That doesn't serve any purpose for us. What is troubling now is that we have essentially said that the principle of lowering bootstraps for people to climb up is bad." And he speaks about having been told by the Reagan adviser Stuart Spencer, who is one of the inventors of the political-consultancy business, that he was too socially conscious to mesh with the current Republican agenda.

The figure of Powell, it should be said, elicits surprising warmth among many blacks whose relation to the political establishment has often been more adversarial than not. Marian Wright Edelman, the left-liberal head of the Children's Defense Fund and herself a best-selling author, recalls, "The first time I heard him speak at the Council on Foreign Relations, he was so effective that I had to force myself to remember that we disagree on certain military policies. He certainly has a central core of integrity." Another prominent advocate, Hugh Price, who is president of the National Urban League, is sure that "if Powell is elected, he will be elected because the Americans are hungry for a person who stitches the country back together again—who brings a sense of decency, coupled with a sense of resolve and toughness." Invoking Powell's military background, the black philosopher and social critic Cornel West says, "If he could push through a Marshall Plan for the cities, that would be extraordinary. My hunch is that it would be very difficult to do, but he might be open to it. I have my own critique of the military establishment, but I think he is a man of compassion in his own way."

"I believe the doughnuts were planted in my squad car in an effort to discredit me."

When I asked Roger Wilkins, the liberal commentator and an éminence grise of black politics, whether he would support Powell for President, he didn't have to pause to reflect. "Oh, yeah," he said. Even if Powell ran as a Republican? "Oh, yeah." As a third-party candidate? He grinned. "Third party? Not only would I support him, I'd work my ass off for him." And he voices a widespread grievance when he adds, "Black people are stuck in nowhere's land. Republicans don't want us. And the Democrats take us for granted."

Most of Powell's advisers take a dim view of an independent candidacy. Independent candidates for the White House do not have an inspiring record of success; the electoral college is designed in part to stabilize a two-party system. Ross Perot, several people have reminded me, spent sixty million dollars out of pocket and received not a single electoral vote. "If he had two hundred million dollars put at his disposal, he'd consider it," one friend of the General's insists. "And he may well get it." If you measure the legacy of the most successful independent candidates by sound bites rather than by electoral returns, they do have something to show for their efforts. George Wallace ("pointy-headed intellectuals"), John Anderson ("I'm a social liberal and a fiscal conservative"), and Ross Perot ("giant sucking sound") have all made contributions to the national conversation. So the General's lifelong predilection for the quotable may prove a valuable resource if he decides to hit the campaign trail.

Of course, character—solidity, strength, effectiveness—will be his main selling point. No one thinks that what will distinguish Powell is the split-the-difference approach toward policy matters which he shares with John Anderson. We know where Powell stands on many "hot button" issues, like abortion (he's pro-choice), the death penalty (he supports it), gun control (he'll support mild measures, involving registration or waiting periods), school prayer (he's opposed, but he doesn't mind a moment of silence).

Still, analysts often fail to acknowledge the extent to which elections are character-driven rather than issue-driven. Many things were portended by an electorate that switched its support from Carter to Reagan in just four years, but a massive ideological conversion was not one of them. And Powell has mastered the Rorschachian rhetoric of the well-groomed political candidate. His speeches are more evocative than substantive—short on red meat and long on uplift. Like Whitney Houston, he believes the children are our future—teach them well. "You've got to start with the families," he says of the crisis in the inner cities, "and then you've got to fix education so these little bright-eyed five-year-olds, who are innocent as the day is long and who know right from wrong, have all the education they need. And you have to do both these things simultaneously. It's like being able to support two military conflicts simultaneously." Military metaphors, the worn currency of political discourse in this country, take on a certain vitality when he deploys them. (Indeed, there are those who argue that much of the General's allure stems from a sort of transposition of realms. "I think people are hungry for a military solution to inner-city problems," the black law professor and activist Patricia Williams says.)

"You know, I'm sort of a liberal guy, up to this point," Powell goes on, "but here's where I become a Republican: once these kids come out of school, there has got to be a capitalistic entrepreneurial system that is just burning up the place to create the jobs for these kids. And therefore you've got to get the tax burden off business. You've got to lower the capital-gains tax." Capital gains are not an abstract matter to Powell. "What have I done with my wealth? I bought my wife a nice house, I bought two new suits, leased a new car. What have I done with the rest of it? Invested it. Some of it is in bonds. Where's that bond money going? It's building things—cities. Some of it is in the equity market. What's it doing? It's financing companies. It's looking for more places to create wealth, and guess what happens when that happens. Jobs are going to be created. And so the government's got to get off people's backs. They've got to have minimum regulations, for safety and for some level of security, so we're not plundering things. But after that, get off their backs." Everything clear? Sort of a liberal, kind of a conservative. Clearly black, but, as he explains, not *too* black.

CONJECTURE has a way of feeding on itself: how realistic is any of this Powell-for-President stuff? Bruce Llewellyn, for one, suspects that we have got ahead of ourselves. Will his cousin run? "No. Because he can't win. He can't get the Democratic nomination, he's not going to get the Republican nomination, and nobody can win as an independent. Second, the Republican Party is in the hands of the conservatives, the right-wing zealots, the religious zealots, and they're not about to give him the nomination. I think it's very interesting. Everybody loves Colin Powell, but that's because nobody knows what he stands for." What we've overlooked, Llewellyn goes on to say, is another, non-electoral angle: "The game that's being played right now has to do with selling books. Because nobody knows who he is—this will be the first 'insight' from his own lips. All he needs to do is not take himself out of the race for the Presidency, and keep everybody so entranced and intrigued by it all that they want to know more." And buy a zillion books. "After all," Llewellyn says, "this book is going to sell for about twenty-five bucks a copy."

If you think that Powell's ambitions are less circumscribed than that, however, everything is a matter of the calculation of odds. The polling data are encouraging—at least, to a point. Opinion surveys show Powell, running as a Republican, beating Clinton. The numbers are less rosy when he runs as an independent alongside Dole and Clinton: then Dole and Clinton each get about a third of the vote, and Powell gets only a fifth. A recent *U.S. News* poll showed Powell receiving favorable ratings from seventy-three per cent of whites but only from fifty-seven per cent of blacks. To many of them, Powell may be more of a name than a face: almost a fifth of those African-Americans who said they knew of Powell reported that they didn't know what race he was. This will almost certainly change in the upcoming weeks.

There are other factors to consider. The political scientist Ron Walters has argued, "In the black community, Powell's poll numbers are much lower because he has to confront the greater familiarity and proven fidelity of Jesse Jackson, who is rated much higher there but lower than Powell among whites." What makes things especially tricky for the Powell pollster is the well-established distortive effect of race on polling data—many black candidates who soar in opinion surveys get sunk in the voting booth. Powell says, "Every time I see Earl Grave, he says, 'Look, man, don't let them hand you no crap. When they go in that booth, they ain't going to vote for you.' " Or as Walters explains, "When you do a public-opinion poll, what happens is that whites, particularly, lie. They don't answer the polls the way they're going to vote. So right now you have to discount some of Powell's support because of race."

All number-crunching aside, it is hard to discount a sense of hopefulness and enthusiasm, which you often encounter in unexpected places. Powell, who has accumulated a store of anecdotes from people who have been urging him to run, tells of a four-star admiral who took a ride with a white taxi-driver. The driver launched into a monologue about how terrible black folks were, but then brightened when he found out whom the admiral worked for. "General Powell? Shoot, if he runs he'd have a thousand taxi-drivers voting for him." But Powell cautions, "The question is whether this is just popularity or political power. There's a difference."

Well, sure. But maybe not such a big one. He talks about friends who watched his television appearance after he, Senator Sam Nunn, and Jimmy Carter had prepared the way for a peaceful occupation of Haiti. "Some of my friends and advisers checked back with reporters. And one of the reports that came back to me was 'Well, you know, we were anxious to see Colin again, because this was the first time we'd ever seen him without that suit of lights, without all the medals and all the stars, and we figured he'd be diminished. And he wasn't.' "

Indeed, perhaps the most striking

"I am forsaking all others, but these things take time."

GETTING BACK IN

Melodies of the past, fibres, tangled tracings . . .
Getting back in is the easy part.
Being stuck in today isn't.

What is this "today" you speak of so incessantly?

It's where the rubber meets the road and they discuss
in one long fawning kiss. It's the posse's
new poster child. It's . . . My system was downloaded
but bogus retorts are still coming out of it.
It's pleasures and palaces. A commitment.

This is where the road tires and all vehicles
instinctively lean toward some breakdown lane
or other but there aren't any. The police,
of course, are aware of this but don't let on.

I see where someone was put in prison just for dreaming.
Sixteen long years. And when they let them out,
they go back to it. It's as natural for them as copper moths
or striped cabañas in the rain forest. You do have got to
give credit to the organizers, though. Without them this whole thing
would be as chaotic as a clambake. And us with no spirits,
no place left to land. No airport wants us.
And if we get juiced and relax everybody wants us
for purposes of synchronicity. A single item is too many,
but a pair is just fine, they say.

Well, I've had it with the 'burbs.
From where I sit I can see hundreds of freight cars,
some of them painted bright colors, but mostly
they are of a dark sort of color.
It's so lissome, the light! Rabbits everywhere . . .

—JOHN ASHBERY

polling results aren't Powell's positives but his remarkably low negatives. Among whites and blacks alike, only five per cent report an unfavorable impression of him. It's in that respect, above all, that the familiar Eisenhower analogy gains force. And Powell himself clearly has a Republican model in Eisenhower, whose appeal he characterizes in terms that resonate with his own public profile. "Eisenhower was a person who could put together very interesting coalitions and be a natural war leader the people would respect," he says. "They saw Ike and they felt comfortable and confident. *I* like Ike." But a black Eisenhower? Well, why not? Julian Bond says of Powell, "He is a handsome, clean-cut guy, but he's not sexy. And therefore not threatening. Powell is a good-looking guy, but he's not going to steal your girl."

Alma Powell herself is widely viewed as a substantial political asset—someone who is both sophisticated and anodyne. She comes from a family that has been part of the black haute bourgeoisie for several generations. She has inherited an understated sense of cultural security and social confidence: an absolute knowledge of where she fits into society, black and white. She is also at home with power, her own and others'. Discussing what kind of First Lady she would make, Weinberger compares her to the patrician Barbara Bush, in that "she is a lady who is perfectly comfortable with herself and therefore makes everybody else feel very much at ease." He adds that "the people who give a lot of parties and people who go to a lot of parties and people who are in various embassies around the world, they all feel the same way about her: she would also be a very fine hostess in the White House." What strikes me is that there seems to be nothing outlandish about this subject of conversation—a subject that is, historically speaking, outlandish indeed. But plausibility—supreme plausibility—is an attribute that the General and his wife have in common.

You might argue that this plausibility has never fully been put to the test—subjected to the rough-and-tumble of electoral politics. You might argue that Powell's scant unfavorable rating is simply a reflection of that. As a candidate, Powell would have to be reconciled to the sheer negativity of the modern political campaign—a particular concern for a man who, as his close friends affirm, can be short-tempered and sensitive to criticism. Something that Alma once said stays with me, too: "Even if you don't have any skeletons in your closet, someone in your family might."

"Once you get in, the knives come out, and they start poking away at you, shaving away your image," says Kurt Schmoke, whose own name was once bandied about as a possible candidate for higher office. And Vernon Jordan cites a sobering precedent: "In 1980, the press just pushed—*pushed*—Ted Kennedy into the race, and the moment he got into it they cut his dick off." Cornel West foresees another potential development on the campaign trail: "Once the ugly attacks and assaults really begin, Colin Powell will be forced, to some degree, to come out swinging. Then they'll say, 'Oh, my God, he *is* a black man. Look at him. He's full of rage. He's been that all the time.' " And many of Powell's friends would forfeit the dream of the Oval Office in order to protect the aura that he now enjoys. Quincy Jones, a man who, as an entertainment magnate, has made the manufacture of image his stock-in-trade, tells me, "I hope from the bottom of my heart that he doesn't run. Because I would not like to see that fortress attacked. And it would be an attack like you can't believe. He doesn't have to do that for us or anybody else. I would like to just see him remain an icon."

These are sentiments that Powell well understands. "You flatter me by saying, 'You're the first guy who could ever really do it,' " he tells me. "Well, isn't that, in and of itself, almost there?"

"But it's the difference between being John the Baptist and being Jesus Christ," I say. "And you have to decide how you want to be remembered." Then a thought occurs to me. "One ends up with his head on a platter, one's nailed to the cross." Put that way, there doesn't seem much to choose between. Powell explodes with delighted laughter.

While the guessing and second-guessing mount, he'll use his book tour as trial balloon. "Time will run out on me in the fall, and I will have to make a decision. And so the book tour is an important part of this," he says. "I have no illusions about what I have right now. I have a great deal of general celebrity-hero popularity. It is not political popularity, and so the book tour will give me some indication of what I'll have to put up with as a political figure. And when I come off that, then I will do an analysis of what it really requires, and whether I have a vision that is sufficiently different from the vision that's out there. And then Alma and I will sit down. And then one night my instinct will take over and say, 'This is what I want.' "

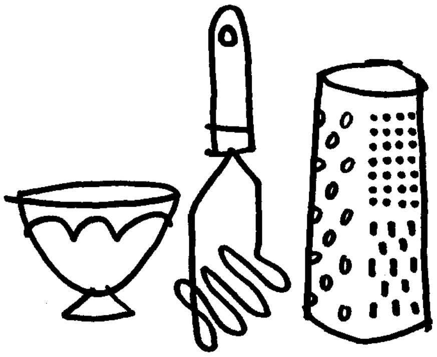
POWELL isn't the only one who's figuring the angles. Despite the General's maxim about never making a decision too late, Caspar Weinberger and many other advisers think it's already too late for him to consider a Presidential bid—assuming that this is indeed what he's considering. Weinberger evidently has other plans for him. "You need to have really started the thing two or three years ago," he says. "This business of lining up delegates in each state and getting on the ballot and getting committees and getting the money and running about eighteen or twenty major campaigns virtually simultaneously takes a very large organizational structure. Now, I've urged him to think very seriously about the option of Vice-President, because if he became a Vice-President with Dole, who might very well not take a second term, Colin would be in an absolutely superb position. I've heard the suggestion quite frequently that Dole had not only offered him the Vice-Presidency but also the job of Secretary of State, which is perfectly legal, constitutionally. That, of course, would remove any worries about the office itself being too trivial."

"It's an intriguing idea," Powell says. "The theory behind it is: God, why would anybody want to be the Vice-President? The Secretary of State–Vice-President idea is a way of taking away some of the misery of being Vice-President, which puts you in hiding somewhere. They park you for four years. I think there's a problem. I don't think you can do two jobs well at the same time, and there *is* a job for the Vice-President." Some people have advised him to wait out the bruising process of the election and then accept a high-level political appointment. "But my instinct tells me that if it's that important to you, then prepare to fight for it," he says. Another theory, after all, is that the Dole camp is floating the possibility of the offer simply as a stratagem to keep Powell from entering the race.

Ron Walters, who doubts Powell's viability as a Presidential candidate, speaks of the Vice-Presidential slot as the best way in for Powell: "I think he's probably figured out that that's the only way that a black person is going to be President. Every day Powell doesn't make the decision to run, money slips and goes to Dole. Now, some of that money is going to go to Dole with strings attached, and some of those will be Powell strings. So I think Powell loses nothing by making money off his book right now and getting himself in position to be Vice-President."

If the electoral appeal of the combination seems obvious, however, it is not universally viewed as a cause for rejoicing. When I ask Roger Wilkins if he'd support a Dole-Powell ticket, he grimaces and says, "That's hard. It would be an act of self-diminution for Powell to accept that slot."

"Now, there's another thing that nobody recommends," Powell says. "But I have to think about it: I'm only going to be sixty-three in 1999—nine years younger than Dole is now." But Powell is a canny man, and he knows how short the national attention span can be. Wilkins says, "Look, we need competition between the parties. As you look at the array of candidates, Powell is quite arguably the ablest. A black man who is admired can make the country understand that getting on with solving our racial problems is not special pleading but a matter of urgency for the entire American community. But Powell has to show up with a program that addresses the critical needs the American people have. If he uses this persona to step out and express deep concerns about the country's economic insecurity and says, 'I represent a better chance of finding an answer to these questions than anyone else,' then I think he will sweep the country."



Colin Powell could be the first black person to be President—and that possibility must have a magnetic pull. But he also realizes that a successful Powell run could permanently alter the political landscape—and the pull of that must be equally powerful. We are sitting together in his Fourth of July office, under the watchful gaze of three Presidents. Just consider, I say to Powell: if he were to secure a Republican nomination and take the black vote with him, the electoral shift would transform party politics—representing, potentially, the most significant realignment since Franklin Delano Roosevelt's second election, in 1936. "It would be a new Republican Party," I point out.

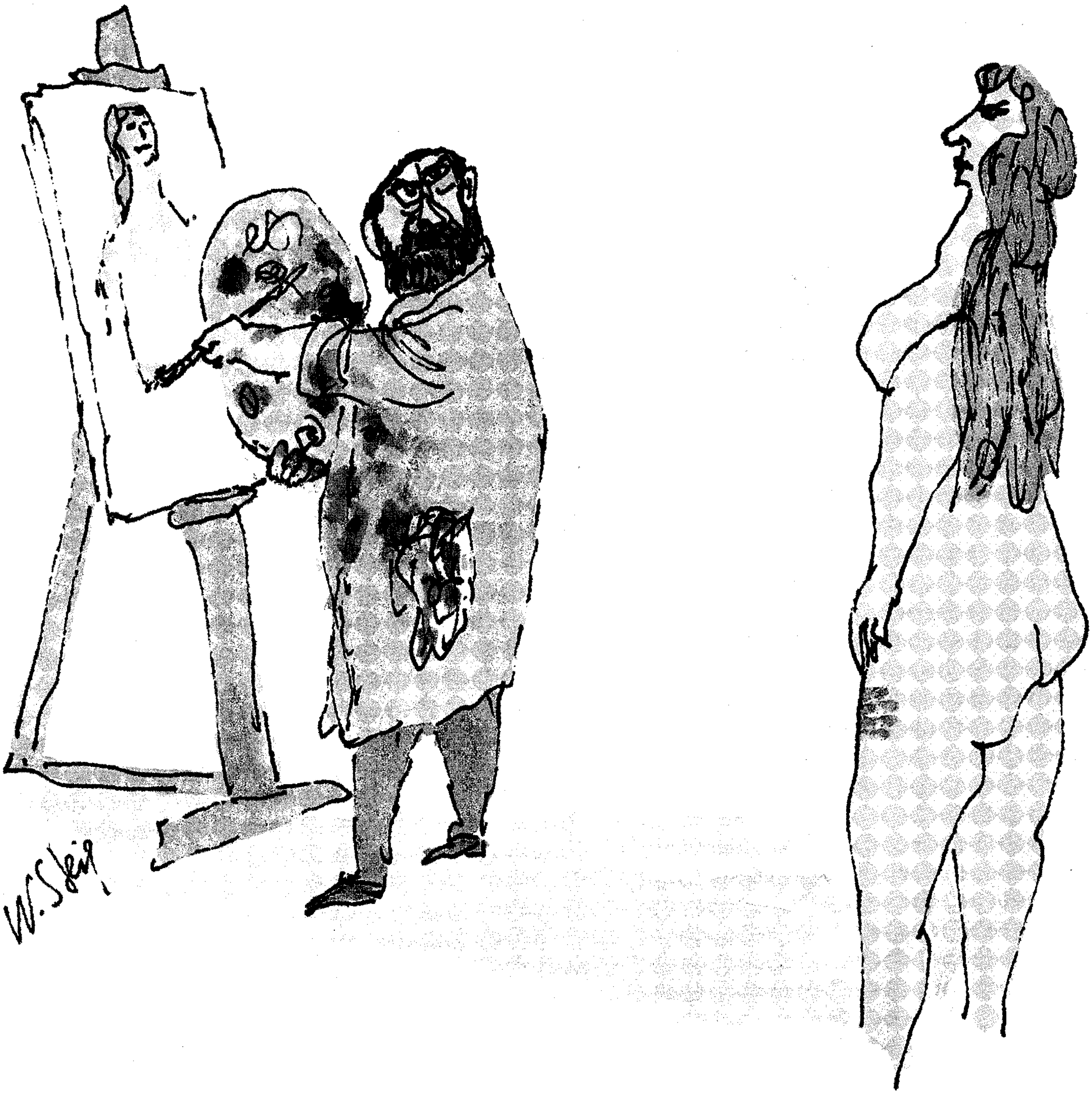
For once, his eyes seem a little misty. "It would be a new Democratic Party," he replies, not missing a beat. "They've never had to worry about a core constituency of black folks. I mean, no party has really lost its core, core constituents, before. And there's just nothing you can do to correct it. Many black congressmen have said to me, 'If you come out, I can't go nowhere. Go out and campaign against you? That'd be crazy.' They can't. They won't. A number of them have said, 'You know we'll campaign for you wherever you are.' "

Imagine, if you will, the Democrats' totemic constituents on the hustings for a Republican candidate. What if this actually came about, I ask him. What if the center held?

"It's hard to redefine or create a new center in a couple of months." The General gives me one of his owlish looks, but there is mischief in his eyes. "I could do it in four years." ♦

SKETCHBOOK · BY WILLIAM STEIG

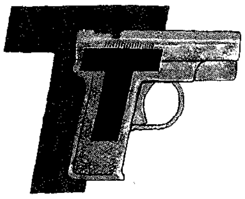
THE MASTER'S HAND



FICTION

BULLET IN THE BRAIN

BY TOBIAS WOLFF



THE line was endless. Anders couldn't get to the bank until just before it closed and now he was stuck behind two women whose loud, stupid conversation put him in a murderous temper. He was never in the best of tempers anyway, Anders—a book critic known for the weary, elegant savagery with which he dispatched almost everything he reviewed.

With the line still doubled around the rope, one of the tellers stuck a Position Closed sign in her window and walked to the back of the bank, where she leaned against a desk and began to pass the time with a man shuffling papers. The women in front of Anders broke off their conversation and watched the teller with hatred. "Oh, that's nice," one of them said. She turned to Anders and added, confident of his accord, "One of those little human touches that keep us coming back."

Anders had conceived his own towering hatred of the teller, but he immediately turned it on the presumptuous crybaby in front of him. "Damned unfair," he said. "Tragic, really. If they're not chopping off the wrong leg, or bombing your ancestral village, they're closing their positions."

She stood her ground. "I didn't say it was tragic," she said. "I just think it's a pretty lousy way to treat your customers."

"Unforgivable," Anders said. "Heaven will take note."

She sucked in her cheeks but stared past him and said nothing. Anders saw that the other woman, her friend, was looking in the same direction. And then the tellers stopped what they were doing, and the customers slowly turned, and silence came over the bank. Two men wearing black ski masks and blue business suits were standing to the side of the door. One of them had a pistol pressed against the guard's neck. The guard's eyes were closed, and his lips were moving. The other man had a sawed-off shotgun. "Keep your big mouth shut!" the man with the pistol said, though no one had spoken a word. "One of you tellers hits the alarm, you're all dead meat. Got it?"

The tellers nodded.

"Oh, bravo," Anders said. "Dead meat." He turned to the woman in front of him. "Great script, eh? The stern, brass-knuckled poetry of the dangerous classes."

She looked at him with drowning eyes.

The man with the shotgun pushed the guard to his knees. He handed the shotgun to his partner and yanked the guard's wrists up behind his back and locked them together with a pair of handcuffs. He then toppled him onto the floor with a kick between the shoulder blades. He took his shotgun back and went over to the security gate at the end of the counter. He was short and heavy and moved with peculiar slowness, even torpor. "Buzz him in," his partner said. The man with the shotgun sauntered along the line of tellers, handing each of them a Hefty bag. When he came to the empty position he looked over at the man with the pistol, who said, "Whose slot is that?"

Anders watched the teller. She put her hand to her throat and turned to the man she'd been talking to. He nodded. "Mine," she said.

"Then get your ugly ass in gear and fill that bag."

"There you go," Anders said to the woman in front of him. "Justice is done."

"Hey! Bright boy! Did I tell you to talk?"

"No," Anders said.

"Then shut your trap."

"Did you hear that?" Anders said. " 'Bright boy.' Right out of 'The Killers.' "

"Please be quiet," the woman said.

"Hey, you deaf or what?" The man with the pistol walked over to Anders. He poked the weapon into Anders' gut. "You think I'm playing games?"

"No," Anders said, but the barrel tickled like a stiff finger and he had to fight back the titters. He did this by making himself stare into the man's eyes, which were clearly visible behind the holes in the mask: pale-blue and rawly red-rimmed. The man's left eyelid kept twitching. He breathed out a piercing, ammoniac smell that shocked Anders more than anything that had happened, and he was beginning to develop a sense of unease when the man prodded him again with the pistol.

"You like me, bright boy?" he said. "You want to suck my dick?"

"No," Anders said.

"Then stop looking at me."

Anders fixed his gaze on the man's shiny wing-tip shoes.

"Not down there. Up there." He stuck the pistol under Anders' chin and pushed it upward until Anders was looking at the ceiling.

Anders had never paid much attention to that part of the bank, a pompous old building with marble floors and counters and pillars and gilt scrollwork over the tellers' cages. The domed ceiling had been decorated with mythological figures whose fleshy, toga-draped ugliness Anders had taken in at a glance many years earlier and afterward declined to notice. Now he had no choice but to scrutinize the painter's work. It was worse than he remembered, and all of it executed with the utmost gravity. The artist had a few tricks up his sleeve and used them again and again—

FILIP PAGOWSKI

a certain rosy blush on the underside of the clouds, a coy backward glance on the faces of the cupids and fauns. The ceiling was crowded with various dramas, but the one that caught Anders' eye was Zeus and Europa—portrayed, in this rendition, as a bull ogling a cow from behind a haystack. To make the cow sexy, the painter had canted her hips suggestively and given her long, droopy eyelashes, through which she gazed back at the bull with sultry welcome. The bull wore a smirk and his eyebrows were arched. If there'd been a bubble coming out of his mouth, it would have said, "Hubba hubba."

"What's so funny, bright boy?"

"Nothing."

"You think I'm comical? You think I'm some kind of clown?"

"No."

"You think you can fuck with me?"

"No."

"Fuck with me again, you're history. *Capeesh*?"

Anders burst out laughing. He covered his mouth with both hands and said, "I'm sorry, I'm sorry," then snorted helplessly through his fingers and said, "*Capeesh*, oh, God, *capeesh*," and at that the man with the pistol raised the pistol and shot Anders right in the head.

THE bullet smashed Anders' skull and plowed through his brain and exited behind his right ear, scattering shards of bone into the cerebral cortex, the corpus callosum, back toward the basal ganglia, and down into the thalamus. But before all this occurred, the first appearance of the bullet in the cerebrum set off a crackling chain of ion transports and neurotransmissions. Because of their peculiar origin, these traced a peculiar pattern, flukishly calling to life a summer afternoon some forty years past, and long since lost to memory. After striking the cranium, the bullet was moving at nine hundred feet per second, a pathetically sluggish, glacial pace compared with the synaptic lightning that flashed around it. Once in the brain, that is, the bullet came under the mediation of brain time, which gave Anders plenty of leisure to contemplate the scene that, in a phrase he would have abhorred, "passed before his eyes."

It is worth noting what Anders did not remember, given what he did remember. He did not remember his first lover, Sherry, or what he had most madly loved about her, before it came to irritate him—her unembarrassed carnality, and especially the cordial way she had with his unit, which she called Mr. Mole, as in "Uh-oh, looks like Mr. Mole wants to play," and "Let's hide Mr. Mole!" Anders did not remember his wife, whom he had also loved, before she exhausted him with her predictability, or his daughter, now a sullen professor of economics at Dartmouth. He did not remember standing just outside his daughter's door as she lectured her bear about his naughtiness and described the truly appalling punishments Paws would receive unless he changed his ways. He did not remember a single line of the hundreds of poems he had committed to memory in his youth so that he could give himself the shivers at will—not "Silent, upon a peak in Darien," or "My God, I heard this day," or "All my pretty ones? Did you say all? O hell-kite! All?" None of these did he remember; not one. Anders did not remember his dying mother saying of his father, "I should have stabbed him in his sleep."

He did not remember Professor Josephs telling his class how the Spartans had released Athenian prisoners from their mines if they could recite Aeschylus, and then reciting Aeschylus himself, right there, in the Greek. Anders did not remember how his eyes had burned at those sounds. He did not remember the surprise of seeing a college classmate's name on the jacket of a novel not long after they graduated, or the respect he had felt after reading the book. He did not remember the pleasure of giving respect.

Nor did Anders remember seeing a woman leap to her death from the building opposite his own, just days after his daughter was born. He did not remember shouting, "Lord have mercy!" He did not remember deliberately crashing his father's car into a tree, or having his ribs kicked in by three policemen at an antiwar rally, or waking himself up with laughter. He did not remember when he began to regard the heap of books on his desk with boredom and dread, or when he grew angry at writers for writing them. He did not remember when everything began to remind him of something else.

This is what he remembered. Heat. A baseball field. Yellow grass, the whirr of insects, himself leaning against a tree as the boys of the neighborhood gather for a pickup game. The captains, precociously large boys named Burns and Darsch, argue the relative genius of Mantle and Mays. They have been worrying this subject all summer, and it has become tedious to Anders; an oppression, like the heat.

Then the last two boys arrive, Coyle and a cousin of his from Mississippi. Anders has never met Coyle's cousin before and will never see him again. He says hi with the rest but takes no further notice of him until they've chosen sides and Darsch asks the cousin what position he wants to play. "Shortstop," the boy says. "Short's the best position they is." Anders turns and looks at him. He wants to hear Coyle's cousin repeat what he's just said, but he knows better than to ask. The others will think he's being a jerk, ragging the kid for his grammar. But that isn't it, not at all—it's that Anders is strangely roused, elated, by those final two words, their pure unexpectedness and their music. He takes the field in a trance, repeating them to himself.

The bullet is already in the brain; it won't be outrun forever, or charmed to a halt. In the end, it will do its work and leave the troubled skull behind, dragging its comet's tail of memory and hope and talent and love into the marble hall of commerce. That can't be helped. But for now Anders can still make time. Time for the shadows to lengthen on the grass, time for the tethered dog to bark at the flying ball, time for the boy in right field to smack his sweat-blackened mitt and softly chant, *They is, they is, they is.* ♦

A REPORTER AT LARGE

AMONG THE GYPSIES

How has life changed for the Gypsies of Eastern Europe since the revolutions of 1989? As the author discovered while living with a Romany family in Albania and travelling through the new democracies, the Gypsies' bonds of secrecy are intact. But Gypsies are still outsiders everywhere, and the pogroms have begun again.

BY ISABEL FONSECA

“TELL me,” Geza Kampus, a Slovakian Gypsy, said. “Where do Roma come from?” On a scrap of newspaper I made a pirate's map and sketched out the route of the exodus of the Gypsies, or Roma, as they call themselves, from India, a thousand years ago. “And we are here.” I drew an X just left of center. X was Geza's one-room house, halfway down the nameless main street of the Gypsy quarter of Krompachy, a town in eastern Slovakia—south of Poland, just west of the Ukrainian border, close to Romanian Transylvania. We were sitting smack in the heart of Mitteleuropa, or, geographically speaking, in sub-Carpathian Ruthenia—a place where people (Robert Maxwell, many American Gypsies, Andy Warhol's parents, my grandmother) tend to come from rather than go to.

The Gypsy migration has been likened to the skeleton of a fish spread over the map of Europe. If one included every group, or every imagined group, that peeled off in its own direction, perhaps that is how it would look. But I tried to keep my map simple, with two main lines indicating the human trek: India to Persia, and then a fork, to Syria and what would become Iraq in one direction, and in the other to Armenia and then on into Western Byzantine territory—Constantinople and Thrace—then the Balkans, Western Europe, and the New World. Holding the X down with one finger, I turned the map toward Geza. He studied it, looked up, and smiled, apologetic but firm.

“It just doesn't fit,” he said, leaning back and showing a half octave of per-

Above: A Gypsy family in Tirana, Albania. The most presentable houses in Gypsy settlements are usually at the front. They conceal the real slums—the ones with names like No Man's Land or Take It or Leave It or Bangladesh.

JEREMY SUTTON-HIBBERT

fect ivories. "I'm sorry, but that just can't be right." You might have guessed Geza's Indian origins. If you saw him on a Bombay bus or the London Underground, you wouldn't think twice: dark-skinned, well proportioned and delicate, with straight black hair and jet almond eyes, he was an Indian archetype. Even if he hadn't heard of India, Geza would have noticed that he was unlike his tall, white, round-shouldered Slovak neighbors, with their gray eyes and yellow teeth and tobacco mustaches. On the other hand, he might have asked me about the origins of his people to make small talk. I didn't meet many Gypsies who were interested in such matters, although in Eastern Europe they were surrounded by people who seemed to talk of nothing but national or ethnic identity.

"Well, what do *you* think?" I asked him, folding the map over. "Where do you think the Roma come from?"

Geza turned his palms up, opened his eyes wide, and pulled down the corners of his mouth, thoughtful again. After a while, his smile flipped back up. "Krompachy?" He raised his shoulders. "I don't know. I think we come from Krompachy."

"And where are *you* from?" asked one of his daughters, who had been following our conversation.

"America," I replied.

"Oh, I've been there," she said.

"You *have*?"

"Yes, that's just by Michalovce," she said, referring to a town forty kilometres away.

Despite their large numbers (estimates run as high as twelve million, as compared with roughly thirteen million Jews in the world today), the true story of the Gypsies—their origins and diaspora and remarkable internal cohesion—remains an area of almost occult interest. Even the romantic versions of Gypsy life which became fashionable in painting and novels and opera in the nineteenth century did little to provoke serious investigation. And you still won't find an arrow for them among those marking the movement of peoples in the "Times Atlas of World History." One must look instead to small-circulation, special-interest publications such as the *Journal of the Gypsy Lore Society*, or to the study of Romani, the Gypsy language, and to what the eminent Gypsyologist Sir Angus Fraser has called "linguistic paleontology."

As Fraser explains, the *rom* of the European Gypsies is *lom* in Armenian Romani, and *dom* in Persian and Syrian dialects. "Romany" has nothing whatever to do with Romania, where, confusingly, the Gypsies have lived in great numbers for many centuries. *Rom*, *dom*, and *lom* are all in phonetic correspondence with the Sanskrit *domba*, which means, Fraser writes, "man of low caste living by singing and music." There are references to the Dom as musicians from the sixth century. The Dom still exist in India; they are nomads, perhaps of Dravidian origin, who do a number of jobs, including basket-making, smithing, metalworking, scavenging, and music-making. Not surprisingly, most scholars opt for a Dom theory of ancestry, although debate still rages. For example, some Gypsy activists argue for the Kshatriyas, a high-ranking caste of Hindu warriors. Early chroniclers had tended to speculate about exotic Eastern ancestors such as the Egyptians, thus the name "Gypsy."

Perhaps as many as eight million Gypsies live in Europe—mainly in Eastern Europe. They are the continent's biggest minority. In a region with static or negative birth rates, the Gypsies are reproducing in intimidatingly large numbers and are being seized on as the handiest scapegoats for the ills of creaky Communist societies in slow transition. Hundreds of thousands of Gypsies died in the Holocaust, and now there are pogroms in Eastern Europe again, with nationalist mobs torching whole settlements. Last February, in Austria's Burgenland, where Roma have been settled for more than three hundred years, four men were killed by a pipe bomb when they tried to dismantle a sign that said "Gypsies go back to India." In Italy, Gypsy children have been maimed by bombs planted in dolls or children's books and given to them on the highway. Since the Velvet Revolution, at least twenty-eight Gypsies have been killed in racist attacks in the Czech Republic and Slovakia. And many of the eight hundred thousand Gypsies of the former Yugoslavia are among the dead in the continuing Balkan war, although Gypsies have no interest in a nationalist scramble for land and no voice in the negotiations that will dramatically affect their lives. It isn't hard to see that the energies of nationalism would be excited by the particular difficulties that the Gypsies present for a bankrupt state. Gypsies are mostly illiterate, mostly unemployed, and mostly without proper housing. Their lives are about a third shorter than those of their countrymen.

"YOU will never learn our language," a Gypsy activist proudly told me on a bus in Bucharest. He didn't mean that I had a wooden ear. "For every word you record in your little notebook, we have another one—a synonym, which you can never know. You wouldn't figure out how to use them anyway, or what nuances they carry. We don't *want* you to know."

This man, who is devoted to exposing and fighting anti-Gypsy racism, was reinforcing one of the oldest slanders: that Romani is thieves' cant, the argot of liars. But what he was really talking about was survival. For more than a millennium, the survival of the Gypsies has depended on secrecy: on disguise and misrepresentation, on keeping customs and ambitions hidden, on burying the past. The sociologist Marlene Sway has pointed out that although the belief that the Gypsies should remain a separate people is not based on a theological precept, their world view, codified in hundreds of unwritten laws and superstitions having to do with social and moral boundaries, is not unlike that set forth in the Talmud: "Be deliberate in judging and raise up many disciples, and make a hedge for the Torah."

Attempts to break down the hedge, however well meaning, can have terrible repercussions. One of the most tragic stories I know about cross-cultural misunderstanding occurred in Poland in the early nineteen-fifties, when a woman whose real name was Bronislawa Wajs but who was known by her Gypsy name, Papusza (Doll), was taken up by the *gadje*, the non-Gypsies. Papusza was one of the greatest Gypsy singers and poets of all time and, for a while, one of the most celebrated.

Papusza's family was nomadic—part of a great *kumpania*, or band of families, travelling in caravans. Men, women, children, horses, carts, dogs, and sometimes bears—until the mid-sixties, such convoys could still be seen moving along the roads of Eastern Europe. Papusza's

"Sorry I'm late, boss. I hit a deer and had to make it look like an accident."

people were harpists, and from northern Lithuania to the eastern Tatras they hauled their great stringed instruments, upright over the wagons like sails. When Papusza's *kumpania* stopped for more than a day or two—and even nomadic families usually had winter digs somewhere—she would bring a stolen chicken to a likely villager in exchange for lessons. This is how she learned to read and write. For more chickens, she acquired books, a secret library. When Papusza was growing up, in the nineteen-twenties, literacy was almost unknown among Gypsies, and when she was caught reading she was beaten and her books were destroyed. At fifteen, Papusza was married by arrangement to an old and revered harpist, Dionizy Wajs. It was a good marriage, and she was very unhappy. She bore no children. She began to sing.

Drawing on the Gypsy tradition of improvised storytelling and on short, simple folk songs, Papusza composed long ballads—part song, part poem, spontaneously "enacted." Like most Gypsy songs, Papusza's were wringing laments about poverty, impossible love, and, later, the yearning for a lost freedom. They spoke of rootlessness and the *lungo drom*, or long road, of no particular place to go—and of no turning back. Papusza wrote at a critical moment in her people's history. Life along the *lungo drom* was coming to an end, and nothing recognizable or tolerable seemed to be taking its place.

Nostalgia is the essence of Gypsy song, and seems always to have been. But nostalgia for what? *Nostos* is the Greek for "a return home"; the Gypsies have no home, and, perhaps unique among peoples, they have no dream of a homeland. Utopia—*ou topos*—means "no place." Nostalgia for utopia: a return home to no place. Perhaps it is the yearning itself that is celebrated. But the nostalgia of Gypsy song is weighted with fatalism. "The crack of Doom/Is coming soon./Let it come, /it doesn't matter" goes the refrain of a Serbian Gypsy song.

By chance, in the summer of 1949, the Polish poet Jerzy Ficowski heard Papusza sing, and he persuaded her to write her stories down. In October of 1950, several of Papusza's poems appeared in a magazine called *Problemy*, alongside an interview with Ficowski by the distinguished Polish poet Julian Tuwim. There is talk of the ills of "wandering," and the piece ends with a Romani translation of the Communist "Internationale."

In 1952, a broad program to force the Gypsies to settle went into effect in Poland; it was known as the Great Halt (although that goal was not fully achieved until the late seventies). The plan belonged to the feverish fashion for "productivization," which, despite well-intended welfare provisions, in fact imposed a new culture of dependency on the Gypsies. Similar policies were adopted in Czechoslovakia, Bulgaria, and Romania, as the vogue for forced assimilation gathered momentum.

Jerzy Ficowski became a government adviser on "the Gypsy question." The first edition of his great book "The Gypsies in Poland" included a chapter called "The Right Way," which—though it was omitted in subsequent editions and perhaps was included only as a condition of publication—gave his backing to the policy of settlement for the fewer than fifteen thousand Polish Gypsies who had survived the war. Ficowski cites Papusza as an ideal, and suggests that her poems might be used for propaganda purposes among the Gypsies. "Her greatest period of poetry writing was around 1950," Ficowski noted, "soon after she abandoned the nomadic way of life." Despite the fact that her poems constitute an elegy for that life—not so much abandoned as confiscated—Ficowski, in his role as apologist for the policy of compulsory sedentarization, asserted that she was "a participant [in] and mouthpiece" for these changes.

Soon after the publication of her poems in *Problemy*, Papusza had been identified among the Gypsies as a culprit in the accelerating campaign to destroy their traditional way of life. She had done something unforgivable: she had collaborated with a *gadjo*. She tried desperately to reclaim the authorship of her own ideas, her songs. She rushed to Warsaw from her home in southern Silesia, begging the Polish Writers Union to intervene. She was refused. She went to the publishing house that was preparing Ficowski's book, in which her poems were to be included. No one could understand her. Was she unhappy about the translations? Were there final revisions to be made? Papusza returned home and burned all her work—some three hundred poems. If you print these songs, I shall be skinned alive, she wrote to Ficowski. My people shall be naked against the elements.

Papusza was called before the highest authority among the Polish Roma, the Baro Shero (Big Head, or elder). She was proclaimed *magerdi* (or *marime*, in other Gypsy dialects): defiled. The punishment was irreversible exclusion from the group. She spent eight months in a Silesian psychiatric hospital; then, for the next thirty-four years, until her death in 1987, she lived alone and in isolation. She was shunned by her own generation and unknown to the next. She became her name: a doll, mute and discarded. Except for a spell in the late sixties, when she burst out with a few of her best poems, Papusza never sang again.

In a revised edition of his book, published in 1985, Ficowski reviewed the results of the Great Halt. "Gypsies no longer lead a nomadic life, and the number of illiterates has considerably fallen," he wrote. But even these gains were limited, because Gypsy girls marry at the age of twelve or thirteen, and because "in the very few cases where individuals are properly educated, they usually tend to leave the Gypsy community." The results were disastrous: "Opposition to the traveling of the Gypsy craftsmen, who had taken their tinsmithing or blacksmithing into the uttermost corners of the country, began gradually to bring about the disappearance of . . . most of the traditional Gypsy skills." And finally, "After the loss of opportunities to practice traditional professions, [for many Gypsies] the main source of livelihood became preying on the rest of society."

Now there really was something to be nostalgic about. Wisdom comes too late. The owl of Minerva flies at dusk.

I TRAVELLED among the Gypsies of East Central Europe for months at a time in the years following the revolutions of 1989, and whenever I returned home people would ask me if I had been accepted by the Gypsies among whom I'd stayed. I could say yes. I have been welcomed with bankrupting generosity. But I knew that I would always remain a *gadji*, outside their history.

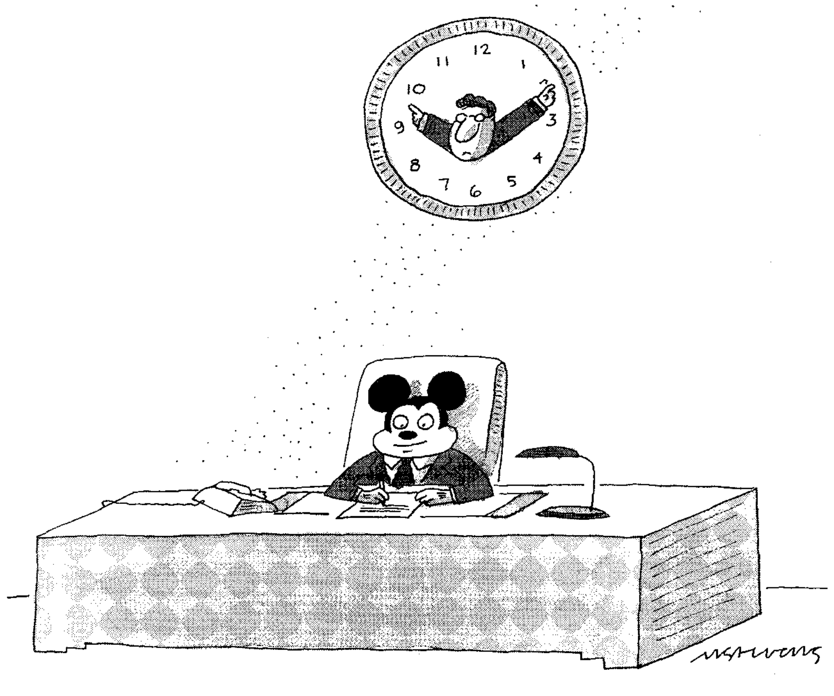
Usually, I travelled alone and made friends along the way. But Albania was different. Albania was as remote and unknowable as Tibet, and I wanted a guide. I needed "Marcel." I had heard his name for years, but all I knew about him was that he was a *gadjo* who spoke Romani; that he had lived for many years in Albania; that he wore a long beard; and that he had no fixed address. Finally I caught up with him at a conference near Bratislava, though it might have been anywhere in the Balkans, where he lived at large.

Marcel had been a left-wing medical student at a provincial French university in the early seventies. He got into trouble for organizing hunger strikes against government cuts, and, disillusioned, left for Vojvodina, where he found work as a grape picker and labored among Roma for the first time. Marcel was a brilliant linguist. He knew Samoan, Hiri Motu (Papua New Guinea), Maori, Tahitian. He could get by in Ajie (New Caledonia), and, of course, he spoke all the "ordinary" languages—French, English, Spanish, German, and passable Polish. His love for the Balkans—and his vocation as a linguist—was settled when he travelled for weeks with a piglet under his shirt and was received everywhere as a bringer of good news.

"I stayed for some months in a monastery in Slovenia," Marcel said. "With no money at all, I had no way of thanking the monks who had been so kind to me. After much thought, I decided to give them the piglet, who, after all, was already something of a pig. They were very pleased. The abbot held him in his arms like a baby. I shall never forget it: *he could speak to it in its own language*."

Marcel was one of a handful of *gadje* I met who devoted themselves to and identified with Gypsies. Such groupies were called *puyuria*—from the Romanian for "puppies," or "cubs," or "chicks." There were other, less affectionate terms; and a contempt sometimes showed itself, along with accusations that the *puyuria* were profiting from the Gypsies' distress. Marcel spent his life going to international conferences, representing Gypsies, and, above all, working to standardize the Romani language. Some months after our first meeting, he and I shared a taxi. A taxi from Bulgaria to Albania—twelve hot hours across the memory of Yugoslavia.

Although Marcel hadn't bothered to make arrangements with his Albanian Gypsy friends, he was confident that some of them would be happy to have me as their guest for the summer. And, indeed, I was welcomed unquestioningly by the Duka family. They lived on the edge of Tirana, the capital of Albania, in the quarter known as Kinostudio, literally Movieland, or Hollywood—typical Albanian humor about a settlement built on the city's garbage dump. The Gypsies in Albania, like all Albanians, had been totally cut off from the rest of the world by Enver Hoxha, the paranoid late dictator who banned travel even to other Communist countries, and who covered Albania with concrete bunkers, instilling in citizens the idea that all for-



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eigners are potential invaders. Albanian Gypsies are only dimly aware of their Romany brethren living in diaspora throughout the world. Still, the Roma of Kinostudio have more in common with those far-flung Gypsies than with their fellow-Albanians, among whom they have lived for nearly six hundred years.

The night I arrived in Tirana, only Jeta, the Duka matriarch, and Dritta, her broad-faced, sultry young daughter-in-law, had waited up. Jeta was plump but compact and energetic. Though she looked much older than her forty-four years, her movements were springy and youthful. While Dritta yawned prettily, Jeta's whole body was turned to our needs, and she produced a late supper. The next morning, the other women of the family filed in one by one, inspecting me in the master bed, where I still was at seven o'clock, in what locally constituted a lie-in. First came Liliana, the limping spinster daughter, who hid her Cubist face (eyes on different planes, variously moving facial muscles, the suspicion of a harelip) under shiny pelts of thick black Indian hair. Then came the *boria*, the daughters-in-law, as the young wives of the Duka boys were called. Violica and Mirella shyly advanced behind their small sons, whom they pushed forward with a hand on each shoulder.

After the little ones had touched my hair or some thread of my raiment, and the women had put the burning question of Gypsy women everywhere—"How many children do you have?"—they filed out to get on with daily life. This was washing and cooking for the *boria;* smoking and cards and TV for the men. Artani, the only Duka with a job, went to work before first light. He collected Tirana's garbage, for which he was paid eight hundred leks, or eight dollars, a month. He went mainly for something to do, to walk into town in the cool dawn, to get away. The other two Duka brothers stayed at home. Nicu, who had picked Marcel and me up at the border, slept in, and Nuzi, the restless, high-voiced James Dean of Kinostudio, sat moodily on the porch step, chewing an unlit cigarette and patting his shoulder-length hair, waiting for Liliana to make his coffee.

Unlike her brothers, who had attended school briefly, Liliana had never been educated. Nor would she qualify for marriage and motherhood. Lili was sweet-natured, patient, hardworking, and popular with the children, who, because she was childlike but also because she was childless (and therefore not quite considered an adult female), thought of her as one of them. But with her whiffly speech and her tics and her funny leg, she was regarded as *dili*, or mentally retarded, although she seemed quite intelligent to me.

Making coffee was Liliana's job, and, ever since Nuzi lost his post at the Ministry of Vegetation, waiting for it was his. He feigned disgust with Artani for selling his time for so little money, but the truth was that it was time that so burdened Nuzi. His old job, which had involved discouraging the ivy on the innumerable statues of Enver Hoxha, planting shrubs, mowing public grass, and generally keeping up appearances, was a properly civic expression of Nuzi's natural primping proclivities; it had been a source of pride and health to him. The point about Artani's job was not that he liked it, or earned a living from it, but *that he had it.*

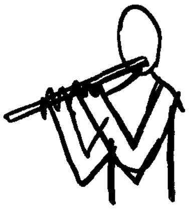
Absent that first day were Bexhet, Jeta's husband and the father of all, and Djivan, the ten-year-old son of Nicu and Dritta. Until suppertime, grandfather and grandson were away in Berat, a city south of the Shkumbi River, visiting a couple and their nine-year-old daughter—to whom Djivan had just become engaged. Seeing my surprise, Jeta reassured me. "They won't be getting married for three or four years," she said. "What did you think? They're only kids."

THE Dukas lived in one of the first houses in the quarter, on a sloping dirt track that led up to the tarmacked road to town. The house was a single-story, lime-slaked shambolic structure with a covered porch and a cement courtyard. Three barnacle-like rooms patched together from different materials (tin, board, cement) had been added on as one brother after another brought home his bride.

Family life took place in the courtyard, twenty-five square feet of children, chickens, and clothes hanging out to dry. Apart from Jeta—and except for quick dashes for bread or butane—the women hardly ever went out. They were too busy. From around five-thirty in the morning, the day was a cycle of duties, with the burden falling on Violica and

Mirella (called Lela), the younger wives. These women's husbands never addressed them by their names, or called them "wife" (*romni*), or used any term of endearment; nor were they called "mother" (*dai*) by their children. Everyone referred to them as the *boria*, and, indeed, it was Jeta to whom they were answerable, not their menfolk.

The *boria* got up before everyone else, including the *khaxni*, the hens. They moved silently about, collecting wood from a tidy pile that they maintained along one inner wall of the courtyard. In the sooty light they built a neat fire, always the same, neither too high nor too feeble. While the water heated up, the girls gathered any vaguely soiled blankets, rugs, and clothes for washing. Each had her own work station in a different corner of the courtyard and there she set up a long tin tub on an old wooden crate. They poured in boiling water and swirled it around, beginning the real ritual: hours of trance-like, rhythmic rubbing, interrupted by a stream of demands—a hungry child, an insufficiently caffeinated father-in-law.



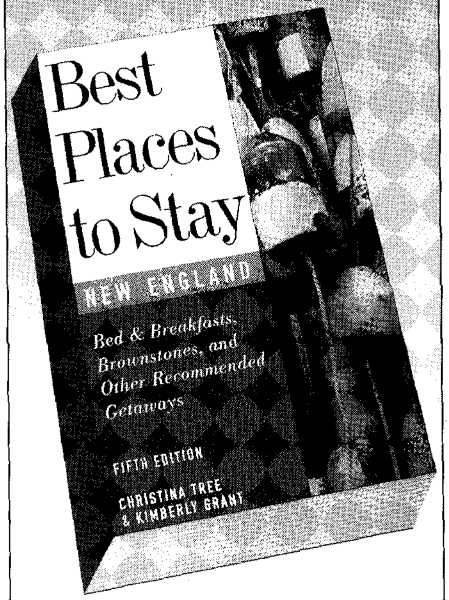
Everywhere in the Balkans, life felt unstable. But among the Dukas one felt as they did: utterly safe, in a family. Kinostudio itself was a family—practically the whole neighborhood was related. There was no intermarriage between Albanians and Gypsies in Kinostudio, but, far from suggesting a demoralized culture, endogamy here seemed the mark of a buoyantly confident group, settled in their skin and not needing outsiders. Within a day, everyone knew that I was there and that I was with the Dukas. I was chaperoned everywhere. At first, I tried occasionally to slip out for a solitary stroll. No dice. Within minutes, Nicu, Nuzi, Artani, or a set of *boria* would appear at my side.

Even at home, I was never allowed to be alone—not ever. The Dukas did not share the *gadje* notions of or need for privacy. Or for quiet. "The more and the noisier the better" was their creed—one that I found to be universal among Roma. Their concept of a lone person was a Rom who for some infraction had been banished from the group. There was something wrong with you, some shame, if you had to be alone. Privacy of a kind was claimed in the way that all the Duka women might, as if by previous arrangement, just ignore all the Duka men for a period—and vice versa. Similarly, no one spoke to a man in the morning before he had washed his face. Privacy came in the form of imaginary walls. These walls didn't do it for me, though. I became intransigently constipated, and remained that way for a month of increasing congestion and alarm.

THOUGH there were no shortages in Albania during my visit, food—or, rather, meat—seemed to be the only subject of discussion, and the procuring and preparing of it busied three-quarters of the household for most of each day. Just opposite the house, there was Mish Mas, or Meat Meat, the butcher's. (*Mish* is "meat" in Albanian; *mas* is "meat" in Romani.) But Jeta didn't shop there. The proprietor of Mish Mas would jokingly beckon to her, and she would shout back, *"Ka xlia ma pe tute!"* ("I am going to shit on you!") Wearing her most unforgiving grimace, she pronounced Mish Mas meat *bilacho*, no good, and so every day, cursing the local butcher, she would exchange her slippers for her "city shoes," the shiny black ones with heels, and walk three miles down to the covered market in town. There you could sniff and pinch the meat, and you could really haggle. Jeta knew how to haggle.

Her method involved disgusted jabbing of various cuts of meat spread over bloodied white tiles. Each poke was followed by a hoot or a cluck or merely a disappointed sigh. Such scrutiny of the meat seemed pointless, because, at least to my untrained eye, it was all the same. It was certainly all sheep parts: brains, balls, guts, gut linings, organs and glands, whole skinned heads, and spindly joints. Greasy, stringy ewe or ram—that was the only *mas* you could get, and we got it every day.

All over Central and Eastern Europe, people had recent memories and occasional reminders of severe shortages. The daily meal at the house of an Albanian family I came to know was meagre: bean soup, perhaps, with a piece of fat floating in each bowl for calories—perfectly adequate but in Jeta's eyes derisory. Still, she didn't shop for the future; she trusted in her ability to scour



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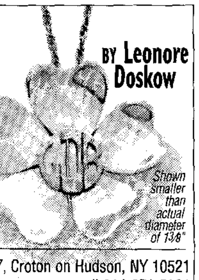

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and bargain and come up with the goods, and get them fresh, every day. As Marcel approvingly observed when he accompanied us on the daily pilgrimage to market, his beloved godchildren—Mario, Walther, and Djivan—conveniently made the meat unappealing to anyone else. Not only did they fondle everything but simultaneously (and theatrically) they scratched their arms and scalps as if for lice, a routine that stopped the minute we were out of the butcher's sight.

Marcel had many Albanian friends. I liked one family in particular, and early in my stay I went to their place often. They had books and quiet, and they lived in town; it felt, at first, like a refuge from the carnival of Kinostudio. Two old people, their two middle-aged sons, and two granddaughters shared three small rooms and a rose garden, from which the father would snip me a blossom each time I dropped by. The two thin girls wanly moved bowls on and off the table. At nineteen and twenty, they had teeth like those of their ancient black-clad grandmother: few, and those yellow-gray and flaking, like elderly toenails. The girls moved as if to say they knew they had no future (this *was* their future), and, to look at them, who could disagree? They had no vitality; they were not going to get out. Their grandfather sat cross-legged on the couch all day long, grinding coffee beans; it seemed a fitting accompaniment. So the father kept his daughters, not because they were *dilia* but because this was Albania: they were educated, kind girls, but that summer unemployment simmered at around seventy per cent, and no young man could afford a wife. The family tortured themselves with the news: life was going on elsewhere. Even the war next door, in the former Yugoslavia, looked O.K., like something to *do*.

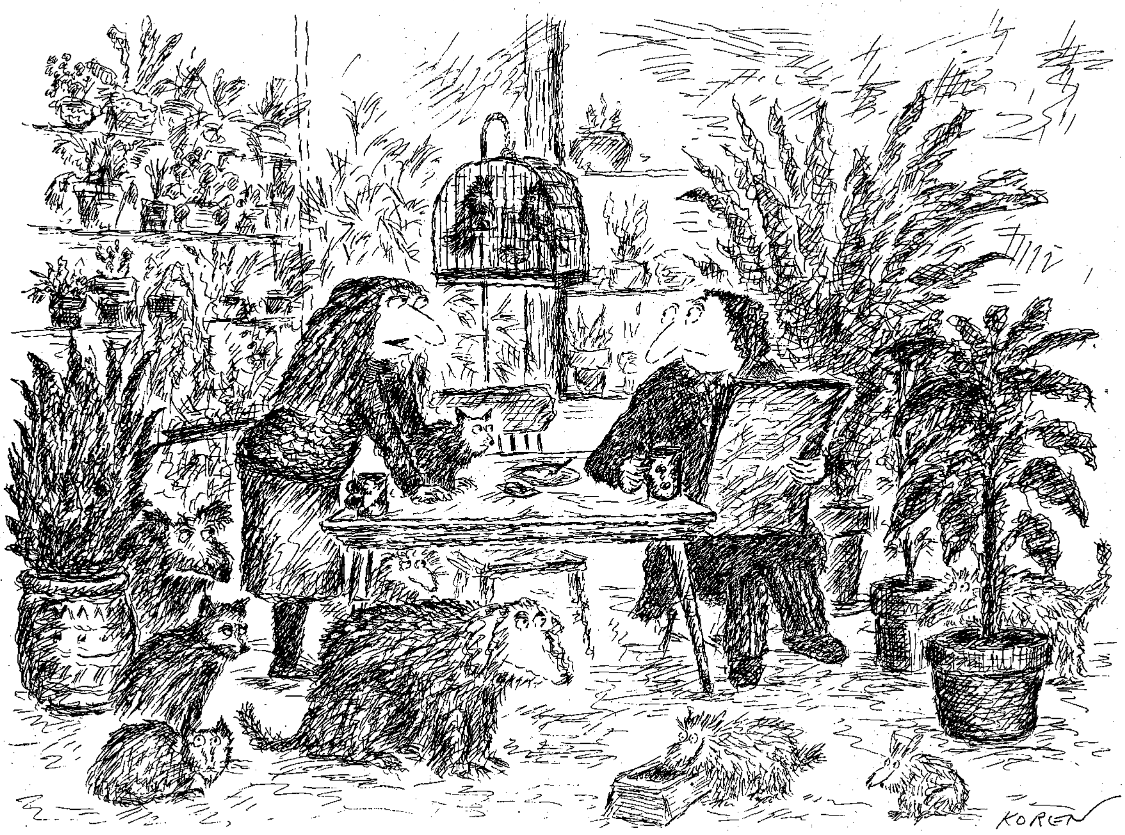
I began to dread my visits, and soon I stopped going. As it turned out, the quiet I had been attracted to was a bitter lassitude and stunned resentment at life in Albania, past, present, and future. It was understandable, but it made you relieved to be back in Kinostudio, where Solitude and her pensive handmaidens had no chance at all.

ONE of the reasons that I had wanted to go to Albania was to see how, or if, isolation distinguished the Roma here from their brethren on the outside. In matters of belief, at least, they were just like some Gypsies I knew in New Jersey. Their spiritual life consisted of a mixture of animism, deism, fear of ghostly ancestors, and imported religion—in this case, Islam.

The Gypsies have fervently held beliefs, but these come from the group and not from an unseen power, and they are as strictly and unquestioningly honored as those of the most zealous fundamentalist. These beliefs are a tightly woven system of taboos and strictures that guard against contamination—of the group, the person, the reputation. They constitute Romipen—Gypsyhood—and they are the key to the unusual ability of Gypsies everywhere to endure persecution and drastic change of many kinds and remain Rom. Relations between *gadje* and Gypsies are highly regulated, as are relations between Gypsy men and women—and the burden of keeping these customs falls mainly on the women. The parts of the body are symbolically cordoned off from one another; the rules about washing, in particular, are more concerned with these boundaries and with ritual purity than with grime.

A woman can "pollute" a man just by throwing her skirts over his head, or, among some groups, even by threatening to do so—thereby making him ritually unclean and in need of purification before other Gypsies can associate with him. The woman has this power because she herself is innately *marime*—if she is married, which is to say sexually active. She must take elaborate precautions not to expose others to her "uncleanness," especially during menstruation, when, for example, she is not allowed to prepare food.

Gypsies, whose yards sometimes seem so squalid to outsiders, can as easily be stunned by examples of *gadjo* squalor—keeping dogs as pets in the house, say, or worse, tolerating cats. Among Gypsies, the cat is regarded as *marime* because it licks its fur and genitals, and so brings dirt inside itself.



"I've been thinking it over, Tom, and I've concluded that there's no room in this family for two people."

Just as most Gypsies keep at least the insides of their houses neat, they are fiercely on guard against having their own innards polluted through improper cooking or washing; by analogy, an animal's regard for the crucial distinction between a *zuzho* or "pure" inside and a *marime* exterior determines whether or not it makes an acceptable pet or meal. Hedgehogs, which are a delicacy for some Gypsies, have spines and therefore cannot lick themselves. Horses are the most beloved animals, partly because they do not foul themselves by licking.

Many customs among the Roma seem to have an Indian ancestry. As in India, only certain groups may eat together without risk of contamination. Contact between mouth and shared implements is scrupulously avoided in even the poorest households. Some Gypsies carry their own knives, in case they have to eat away from home. And, of course, Gypsies do their best to avoid eating food prepared by *gadje*, which almost by definition is bound to be *marime*.

LELA and Viollca washed me every day. They saw themselves as not only responsible for me as their guest but uniquely equipped to combat Albanian germs. There was no point in protesting. As they did for the children, and for themselves at first dawn, they boiled water, and one poured it from a can while the other lathered me up and down. They were efficient and sometimes rough in their scrubbing; frowning with concentration, they ignored my whining when they got soap in my eyes. They showed nothing other than their usual desire to do a thorough job.

As I got to know them, we had a lot of laughs, and both girls opened up. They were fascinated by my body, which, apart from being made up of the same basic female components and being about the same color, was totally unlike theirs. In common with most Gypsy women, the *boria* were short—around five feet—and they had almost no indentation from armpit to thigh. They were as narrow-hipped as boys, small-breasted, and short in the legs. Their feet were ridiculously small. Both girls were unexpectedly hairy—unexpectedly, I suppose, according to the child analogue they presented.

It was my breasts that really intrigued them, though, as if they were boys experiencing their first closeup view. Without hesitation, they moved straight in to inspect. They poked and cautiously squeezed and (perhaps sensing that this might be going too far) very briefly they pinched. What were they doing? Did they think mine might *feel* different from theirs?

Breast-pinching, it turned out, was a game, even a form of punctuation. The girls would grab at each other's breasts as a greeting or as a punch line to a joke. Such play was not exclusive to the Duka *boria*. The anthropologist Anne Sutherland noted similar behavior among Gypsies in the United States. Breasts are associated with babies rather than with sex, and the upper body is not a source of shame. The lower body, by contrast, is considered highly dangerous from the point of view of pollution. Most Gypsy women wear longish skirts, and trousers are banned.

The touching of my breasts seemed to be a gesture of inclusion, but it was also part of a general stocktaking of everything about me that was different. Fascination and disbelief: Lela and Viollca unself-consciously yanked their own breasts out of the tops of their dresses and presented them as proof of my freakishness. These women were twelve and thirteen years younger than I was, but they had breast-fed for years, and their breasts hung in yamlike triangular flaps, with slightly discolored tips for nipples. Shyly earthbound, they were more tuber than sexual characteristic, strange and beautiful. The girls seemed to have stopped developing—rounding and blooming—before reaching womanhood, and then, still childlike, had begun their decline. Old girls—that's what the naked *boria* looked like.

Nothing about me produced so much bemused interest as the twice-daily ritual of brushing my teeth. (One of my nicknames was Dandi, from *dand*, "tooth.") This the Dukas found obsessive and weird, and before they were smacked away by their mothers the boys would gingerly finger my toothbrush, touching it with the tentativeness with which they might have stroked a fledgling that had dropped out of its nest.

IT was rare to find a *modern* malaise in a Gypsy woman; experience was generally too circumscribed. But Jeta was exceptionally bright. Unlike her

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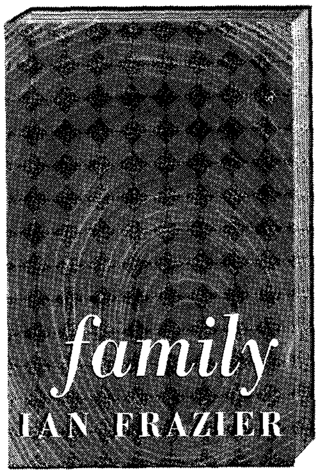

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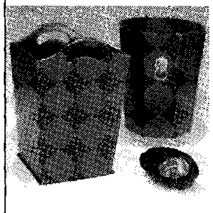

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husband, the cluckingly complacent Bexhet, she had been stirred, under Marcel's influence, to consider the Roma struggle. Alone among her large family, she had inklings, and they imperilled her equilibrium and her tolerance for life in Albania, let alone in Bexhet's courtyard.

One morning I took Jeta off to go *and'o foro,* into town. We paused in front of a shop called a *floktet.* "What's a *floktet?*" I asked, unable to guess from the bare storefront, through which one could see a leatherette dentist's chair and an old stuffed armchair facing the wall. A rusted appliance, perhaps from the nineteen-forties, was displayed on a counter. It looked like an early-model blender: chrome and bullet-shaped and standing about a foot and half high. But the odd machine sprouted a headful of cracked rubber-tube tentacles, each with a clip attachment at the end. A beauty parlor!

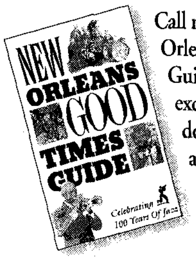
I dragged Jeta inside. Two beauticians in white smocks stood beside a deep sink, their hands demurely crossed in front of them. They shrugged their shoulders apologetically. A handwritten sign on the wall advertised a *"twalet complet"*—manicure, pedicure, and makeover—for the equivalent of thirty cents, but, unfortunately, they had no tools, no nail files, no makeup. The old appliance on the counter that we had spied through the window turned out to be a steam-powered curler-heating device, as confirmed by a few lead curlers with wire fasteners that lay around like spent ammunition. It hadn't worked in years. They did have a bit of shampoo, though, or anyway some green detergent in an unmarked plastic bottle, and so I went in for a wash. I had been hoping to pamper Jeta at the *floktet.* It wasn't much, but I was thrilled when she consented to have her hair washed—by a *gadji,* no less. Jeta was more relaxed than I had ever seen her, sitting in the dentist's chair and humming to herself, flicking disdainfully through Soviet beauty magazines from the early eighties while the two young beauticians rubbed our wet heads. Dinner would be late because of our escapade, and Jeta would have a screaming match with Bexhet, but she didn't care. I still have a lead hair grip from the *floktet.* It is oxidized and encrusted with mineral accretions, as if it had been at the bottom of the sea for a hundred years; you can hardly guess its function.

Refreshed, we began to make our way home. We passed dozens of caved-in, burned-out, ransacked, and abandoned shops, right in the middle of Tirana. And then we arrived at the state maternity hospital. Jeta paused outside the gloomy, totalitarian-era edifice, then took my hand and pulled me inside: never mind that we were late; this, clearly, was something I had to see. She charged past the desk and we walked down the long, dimly lit halls in silence.

The yellow-tiled walls, the ancient steel-tube beds, the unmuffled moans and vintage stench: this place had the feel of a nineteenth-century mental institution, with women wandering around in shredded, browning gowns, waiting in the halls, squatting on the floor. At least the wards were not segregated, as some were at that time in Slovakia—one room for Gypsy women, another for *gadjia.*

We spoke to the resident obstetrician. Sometimes there was penicillin, sometimes not. There hadn't been any anesthetic for several months. Sonograms were unknown here, and there were only two incubators left—a third had been stolen the week before, along with all the hospital's refrigerators and the drugs they contained. The Ministry of Health itself had been gutted; they even took the staircase. From a medical point of view, things were worse than they had ever been before, according to Dr. Viollca Tarc, who had been working these halls for eighteen years. Although doctors were now allowed to perform abortions, what had once been prohibited by law was rendered impossible through lack of equipment or supplies or money (as was true of most of the new freedoms of Eastern Europe—publishing, for example, or travel). So contraceptives were allowed, but there weren't any.

On our way out, we poked our heads into the laundry. In a tall, vaulted room, lit only by sun filtering through high, small-paned industrial windows, five women were bent in a row over low sinks scrubbing sheets on washboards, just like the *boria* back home. In the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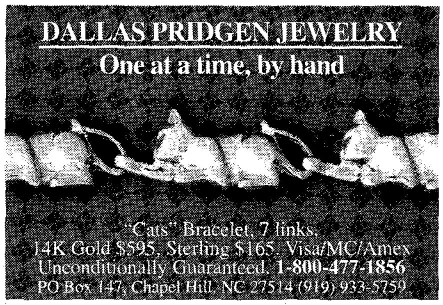
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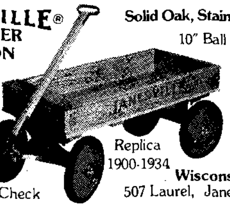
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middle of the room was an enormous cauldron over a ring of blue gas flames. They were cooking sheets. After a good scrub, a woman would hold the sheet up with both hands for inspection, and then she'd toss it back into the pot; with a rosy wooden pole she'd catch and pull up another one. There was blood everywhere. Not just the splashed-on bright blood of wounds and cuts but female blood—dark, gelatinous, clotted. Those gouts of maroon were not going to wash out. Only a week before, there had been a shipment of new linen, a gift from the Swiss government, but it had been stolen within hours of its arrival.

As we walked home, Jeta told me that she had had twenty-eight abortions. (She used the third person: "Jeta had twenty-eight abortions.") She had performed them herself, using a boiled and doubled length of wash-line cable, followed most times by a "mop-up" at the maternity hospital. I wondered where in the Duka household she might have done this; there wasn't even a tub big enough to hold a grown woman. Jeta was the kind of person you could ask, but I didn't.

Such horror stories are common enough in Eastern Europe, and, listening to Jeta, I began to reëvaluate earlier accounts. The experiences of a Romanian friend, for instance, seemed comparatively breezy. In the Bucharest of Ceausescu, she had undergone two illegal abortions on her kitchen table, while her boyfriend guarded the door. But she had had a doctor—or anyway a nameless person in a stocking mask with holes cut for the eyes who was willing to perform the operation. She never had any proof that he was a doctor, but the job was done—the first time for a bottle of whiskey, the second for a carton of Kents.

A WEEK after I visited the maternity hospital and the *floktet* with Jeta, Bextet's anger over our lateness was still smoldering. He forbade her to accompany Marcel and me on a day trip to visit some rural Gypsy communities, relenting only on the condition that he come along and that we stop off in the town of Mrostar, hours away from where we were going, to pay a visit to his brother.

We set off with a packed lunch early the next morning and made a long climb through the calcite-white Dajti Mountains, passing through Fushkrut, where the poorest Gypsies I had ever seen were living in mud huts and twig shacks, some no bigger than appliance cartons. A village a little further on, Grabian, was poor but markedly less desolate. The Gypsies here belonged to a group called the Cherhari, which means "tent dweller," though they are tent dwellers no longer. They carefully (and untypically) maintained fences of tightly tethered branches, and, unlike most Roma, who greet intruders with suspicion or open hostility, they were friendly and relaxed, and they did not press in on us with complaints that they hoped we might pass on to "the government." Exceptionally elegant people, these Cherhari were tall and as dark as bitter chocolate, with long thin faces and features and straight hair.

As we left Grabian, an old woman, so thin that her cheekbones seemed to be pointing out of her face, hung on to my sleeve. She wanted to show me something. She reached into her apron pocket and produced a fuzzy scrap of white paper, no bigger than a gum wrapper, folded down to the size of a thumbnail. The others were already in the car, but I waited while she shakily unfolded it. She held it up, close to my eyes, and I saw nothing—maybe a *slight* smudge of dirt. I took it from her and checked the other side. Nothing. Apart from the grubby crease marks, it was blank. Disappointed, she retrieved and quickly refolded the slip and smuggled it back into her deep front pocket.

What had I failed to see? Written on that piece of paper, she claimed, was the telephone number of her son, a refugee in Italy. It probably had been once, written in pencil that had long since worn away. If she was illiterate, which seemed likely, and had never been able to *read* the characters, what she had seen there was already an abstraction. But I am sure that she did see and continued to see that telephone number. "*Te xav ka to biav*," the old woman called after me as I climbed into the car: "May I eat at your wedding." I felt close to tears as we left and wished we could go back to Tirana. But we drove on, making our long way to Mrostar.

Bexhet's urgent desire to see his "brother" was puzzling. In my first few days with the Dukas, he had tearfully

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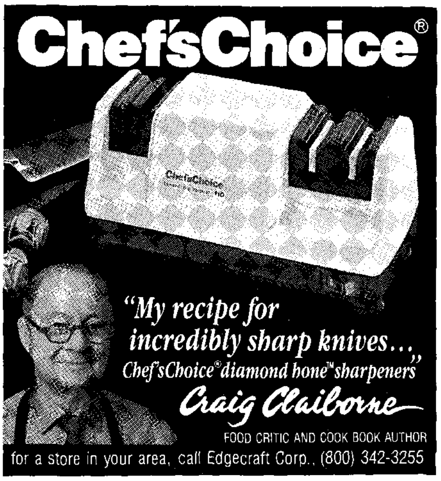

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told me how he had had a brother who died—a story that he had repeated many times. And, sure enough, Aziz Cici was not a brother but a cousin; Bexhet had used the term as a gesture of solidarity. That gesture became clear when the reason for our visit was revealed: Aziz Cici had murdered a *gadjo* and the next week would be going on trial.

When we arrived at Aziz's house, a white three-room structure perched over a railroad track, it was empty. From next door a Romany family who knew Bexhet greeted us with relief and urged us to come in. "God bless your legs," the husband said to me, raising my hand as if to kiss it. I smiled weakly and stole a glance at Marcel. When we had sat down, in a row on a cot, Marcel expanded: "God bless your legs for bringing you here."

The dead man, Fatos Gremi, was a well-known thief and a widely despised drunk; on this everyone present agreed. Nevertheless, since the incident, three months before, the entire Rom population had been ostracized. No one could buy food at the local shop; they were afraid to go out after dark. What had actually happened on the day was the subject of the upcoming trial, and a matter of confused and surprisingly indifferent debate. The drunken Gremi had supposedly tossed rocks at Aziz's window late one night (one person said 7 P.M., another insisted on midnight, a third suggested the hour before dawn). Terrified, Aziz had then rushed to the door (one friend obliged us with a pantomime sadly hampered by space restrictions) and fired a shot into the dark—perhaps not so uncommon in Albania these days. But the bullet struck and killed Fatos Gremi. More terrified still, Aziz dragged the body into the house.

Then he panicked. That night (or the next morning, or days later), he and his wife sewed Gremi into a burlap sack, lugged him to the car, drove to the local bridge, squeezed rocks in to fill the sack, and rolled him off the edge. But the river was low, and the next morning Fatos Gremi was an outcrop and Aziz Cici was an outlaw.

None of those gathered in the neighbor's house attempted to deny that Aziz had committed the crime, or to question the implications of his subsequent actions—he had immediately decamped to the town of Pluk. Instead, they offered competing versions of the timing and the sequence, spiritedly interrupting and attempting to outdo one another, as if to say, "Wait, how about *this*?"

They are all lying, I thought early on. And they're doing it just for fun. Then I began to understand. They did not regard the reconstruction of events as a project of memory. Instead, they told the story as they felt it to be at the moment of the recounting. In front of our eyes, as if for the first time, they were immersing themselves in the drama, conjuring up afresh the feelings that would fit such a terrible deed. The truest version for them was merely the most convincing or the most vivid. The heroic present was where they lived.

This impression was confirmed when Marcel attempted to explain to them what an appeal was, and how it might be possible to have sympathetic international observers at the trial. In the middle of his patient explication, a chicken appeared in the narrow strip between our toes and those of the relatives in the chairs opposite. All the Gypsies wriggled and giggled like children, as if someone had farted during a particularly portentous church sermon. And then, very seriously, they all started talking about the chicken: where it had come from, who was its owner, whether they should just stick it in the pot before someone claimed it, whether those spots on its beak were evidence of a disease whose ravages someone began now flamboyantly to describe, while another explained with the flat precision of a tour guide that "the chicken plague" had been visiting various towns and villages in the region before making its way to Mrostar. The conversation never returned to poor Aziz.

Fractured communication and a spontaneously theatrical approach to indisputably grave stuff was the norm among Gypsies everywhere: it was the spirit that made them attractive, but it was also what made them difficult neighbors. Marcel said that they were incapable of establishing priorities. In fact, their priorities were simply different: value was assigned to all events equally but serially; what was going on at the moment—Aziz's trial, a stray chicken—had top billing. Special fondness was attached to those incidents and persons which had the greatest dramatic possibilities; that is, with a continuing, endlessly repeatable and improvable life in the imagination—memory of a kind.

THE Gypsies have no heroes. There are no myths of origin, of a great liberation, of the founding of the "nation," of a promised land. They have no Romulus and Remus, no wandering, battling Aeneas. They have no monuments, no anthem, no ruins, and no Book. Instead of a sense of a great historical past, they have a collective unease, and an instinctive cleaving to the tribe.

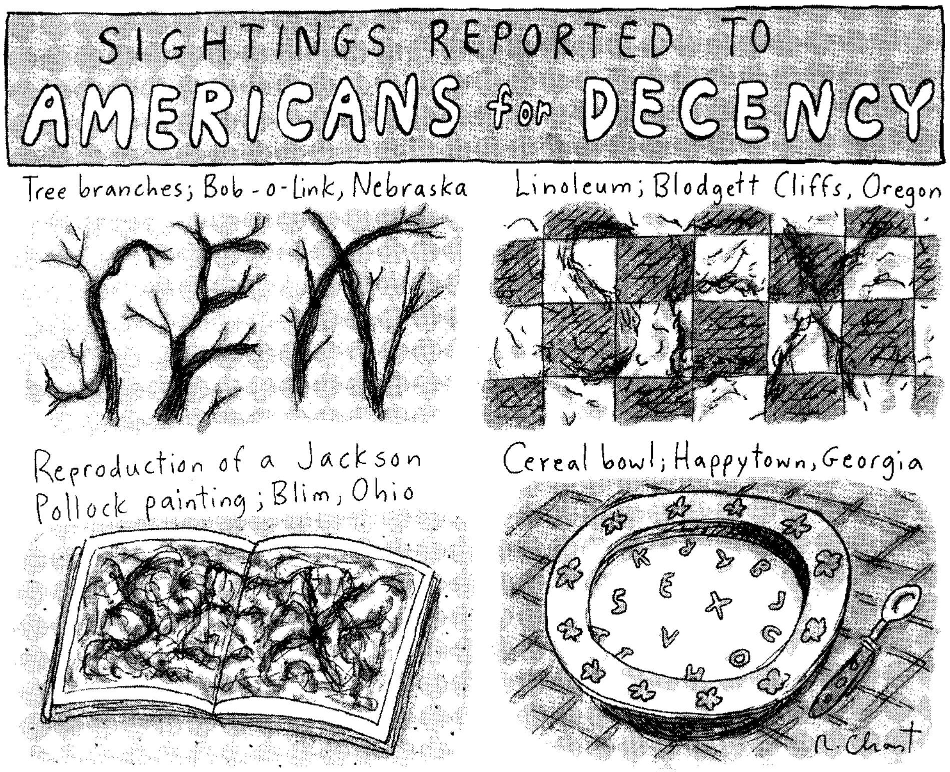
After the Second World War, many Gypsies had vivid memories of interviews with *gadje*. The Nazis were the most thorough of ethnographers. They collected more than thirty thousand Gypsy genealogies. They measured skulls, collected blood samples, and charted eye colors. Today, the great majority of Gypsies know little or nothing of the elaborate and malicious documentation of a sizable group of their ancestors who happened to live in German territory. Most have only a vague idea of the magnitude of the subsequent mass murders. And they are largely unaware, for example, that Gypsies were slaves for four hundred years in Wallachia and Moldavia, now part of Romania. But the legacy of centuries of vilification and persecution nevertheless informs the living memory of Gypsies everywhere. The passionately held view of most Gypsies today is still that *gadje* are dangerous, not to be trusted, and, except for business dealings, are to be avoided. Indeed, in the most general sense, *gadje* are considered to be *marime*. To develop unnecessary relations with them is to risk contamination.

Secrets, of course, can be kept only by consensus and allegiance. For real or imagined collusion with the *gadje*, Papusza was condemned to a living death. The harsh law of the Gypsies—so cruelly at variance with the romantic stereotype of the Romany free spirit—prohibits emancipation of individuals in favor of preserving the group. Often, a disastrous element of mimicry is at work: Papusza was called a "nark," just as Gypsies throughout their history in the West have been dubbed agents and spies. In fact, "nark," British slang for stool pigeon, derives from the Romani word *nak*, or "nose."

During the time I spent in Albania, I didn't meet a single person who didn't want to leave. The dreams of leaving were of different kinds, however. Whereas the Albanians I met wanted to emigrate and "become Europeans," the Gypsies simply wanted to take advantage of the new trade opportunities. The notion of severing oneself from the "family," and its rich pool of future partners in work and marriage, held little appeal. Unfortunately, these values, like most aspects of Gypsy culture, are not understood by outsiders. Among the hundreds of thousands of Eastern Europeans who over the past few years have sought asylum in Germany, the gateway to the West, a huge number have been Gypsies—inspiring panic and Draconian measures to repel them.

Yet Gypsies are potentially ideal migrants. The most dramatic change for Central and Eastern European Gypsies since the revolutions of 1989 has been the sharp escalation of hatred and violence directed against them. Certainly some Gypsies, particularly those from Romania and the former Yugoslavia, are fleeing for their safety. But most are looking for ways to earn a living. (Roma are invariably the last to be employed in the new democracies.) Gypsies want to visit for brief periods, to work in seasonal or otherwise unregimented jobs that, on the whole, don't interest unemployed natives. Above all, they want to buy goods for resale back where they came from.

To be sure, more and more Gypsies are marrying *gadje* (including most of the articulate Romany nationalists). *Konferença*, *kongreso*, *parlamento:* these are some of the most recent additions to the Romani language. Until 1989, Gypsies in the former Eastern bloc had not had much chance to use them, but since then the first Gypsy political parties have emerged, along with their first representatives: members of Parliament, delegates to the United Nations. Gypsy poets, ethnographers, and historians now publish work in Romani and in other languages. In Romania and in Macedonia, there are Romany television programs produced by Roma; there is a first generation of Gypsy editors of newspapers and magazines. All this is new, and the excitement is palpable. But one may also say, without disparagement, that beneath the surface things haven't changed. For the time being, survival demands that the secret society continue. Its tangled underbrush of prohibitions—the Gypsy hedge—is intact. ♦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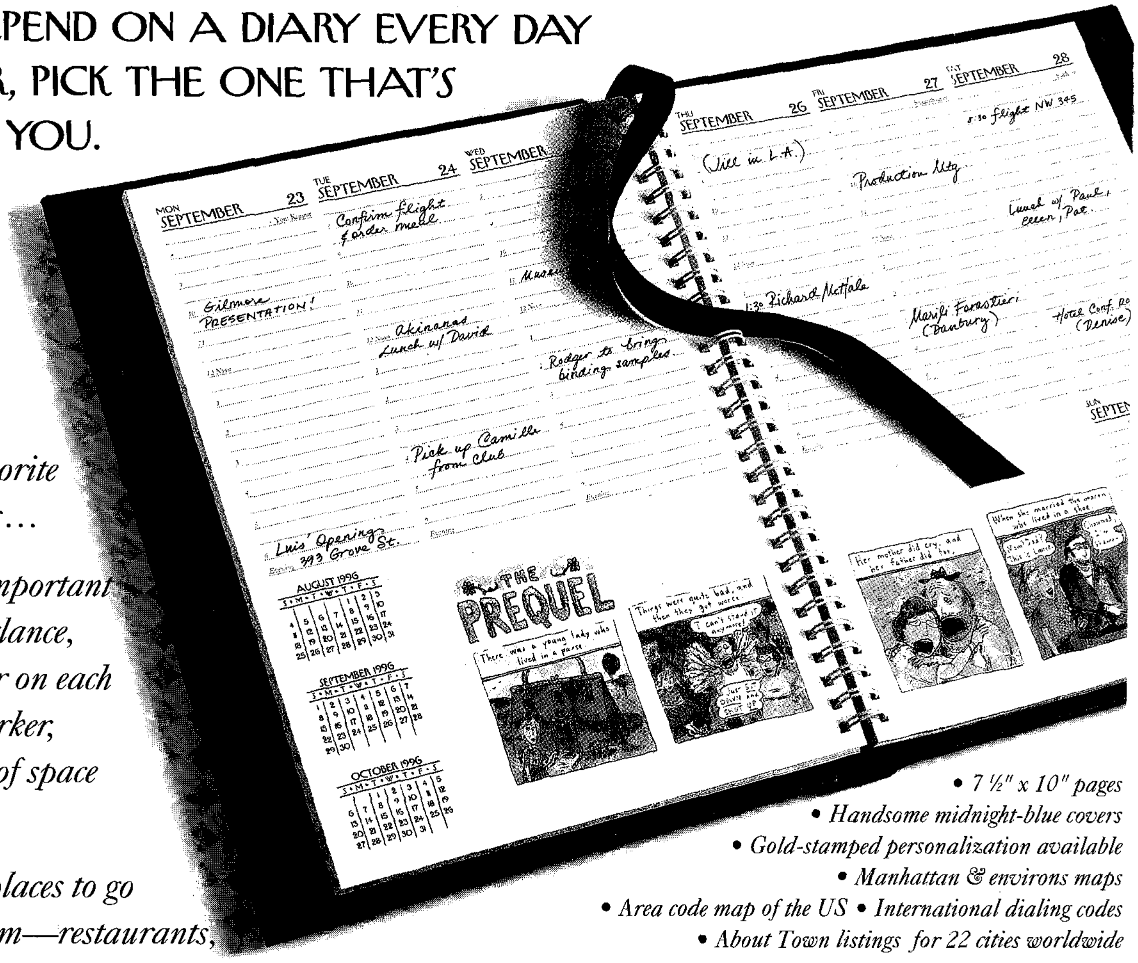
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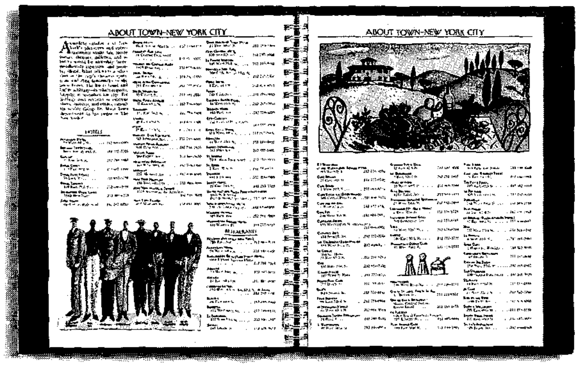
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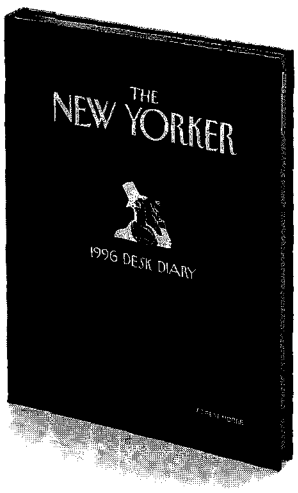
THE NEW YORKER
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BOOKS

RAYMOND CHANDLER'S SMOKING GUN

The outsider wins a home in the establishment.

BY JAMES WOLCOTT

LINED up on the shelves in their glossy black jackets, the books constituting the Library of America resemble tiny, shiny coffins. Modelled on the portable French Pléiades editions of classic authors, the Library of America is the final resting place for writers—where they receive their induction into the canon and a chance for rediscovery by the common reader, assuming there are any left. Until now, the authors whom the Library has chosen have been mostly safe and genteel—illustrious pilgrims in what Alfred Kazin has called "the American procession." With the induction of Raymond Chandler, the American procession sidesteps to fetch its latest recruit. The creator of Philip Marlowe and the man who brought a chin stubble of maturity to the cheeky face of cheap prose, Chandler is not only the first detective writer to be inaugurated into the hall of fame but the first outright popular-fiction practitioner—a genre artist. (Edgar Allan Poe, the original psychic astronaut in the spheres of science fiction, horror, and mystery, practiced metaphysical witchcraft using his skull as the bubbling pot, and was too oddball-baroque to be strictly categorized as a genre writer.) Chandler is also a bit of a reach for the Library of America roster because an American is what he didn't feel himself deep down to be. "I always feel like a phoney when I say 'we Americans' because basically I never have and never will feel quite a native," he wrote his London publisher, Hamish Hamilton, in 1954. His sensibility was transatlantic, a marriage of English taste and American mobility, the mental finery of Henry James hooked up to an exhaust pipe. An expatriate in his own country, Chandler spiritualized the smog.

Chandler: The tough guy was in fact an older, milder owl.

Born in Chicago in 1888, Chandler was taken to England by his mother after his parents divorced. He was educated in Greek and Latin at Dulwich (the same school as P. G. Wodehouse), his young mind gold-leafed with the glory of chivalry. His alter ego Philip Marlowe was first named Mallory, an allusion to "Le Morte d'Arthur." Like Marlowe, Chandler prided himself on being an inside outsider—a sensitive toughie possessing school-of-hard-knocks know-how about the workings of the real world, and lonesomely alienated from society at large. (To Marlowe, the rich are risen scum.) After serving with distinction during the First World War, Chandler returned to America and lived in California with his mother. Employed in the oil industry, he saw the shady side of business, and sometimes burst loose in drunken binges. In 1924, after his mother died, he married Cissy Pascal, a much older woman, to whom he was as slavishly devoted as Dr. Johnson was to his beloved Tetty.

Chandler was also an inside outsider as a writer, jimmying loose the iron-jawed formulas of pulp magazines like *Black Mask* and using the detective genre for his own artistic ends. Reading most pulp writers of that period, you could hear the slug of hot type and the rip of cheap panties. Chandler added a slash and splash of pictorial power. In "The Country Behind the Hill," Clive James observed, "When Chandler wrote casually of 'a service station glaring with wasted light' he was striking a note that Dashiell Hammett had never dreamed of." He also wrested the mystery novel away from the raised pinkie of the Lord Peter Wimsey tearoom set. Like Hemingway, whom Chandler admired and defended (though he couldn't resist taking a poke at him in "Farewell, My Lovely": " 'Who is this Hemingway person at all?' 'A guy that keeps saying the same thing over and over until you begin to believe it must be good' "), he elevated a stiff manner to a stoic code. And, like Hemingway, he put a high premium on style, believing it the best investment a writer could make for posterity. Some styles endure. Others dry to a thick, cracked coat.

IN recent years, Chandler's status as the neoclassical daddy of the *roman noir* has come under scrutiny for reasons that have nothing to do with prose. His political incorrectness has made him suspect. For every academic text analyst diagramming Chandler's tactics on a grid, one can find a jury of socially conscious types doing a sensitivity checklist on Chandler/Marlowe and finding him guiltier than H. L. Mencken. He is cited for bias against Jews, blacks, homosexuals, and Indians with hygiene problems ("His smell was the earthy smell of primitive man, and not the slimy dirt of cities."—"Farewell, My Lovely"). His women are faulted for being either playmate pinups or pathological nuts. Either way, they drain a man dry. Underlying the leftward tilt of these complaints against Chandler is the extreme individualism he lionized in the Marlowe novels. His famous credo from the essay "The Simple Art of Murder"—"But down these mean streets a man must go who is not himself mean, who is neither tarnished nor afraid"—privileges the lone cowboy at the expense of group supervision. That way lies vigilantism. (A mean street plus a mean streak equals Mickey Spillane.)

What irks even some of Chandler's fellow-novelists is that Marlowe never came off his high horse. They find his attitudinizing annoying. Kingsley Amis complains, "There is . . . a moral pretentiousness whereby Marlowe is now and again made the vehicle for criticizing the sordid lives of Hollywood's denizens: the perverted producers, the writers drowning in bourbon and self-hatred, the chicks who will do absolutely anything to get a part—all that. Most of this comes ill from a private eye, even a comparatively honest one." James Ellroy, who considers the dominance of the great white hope a great white hoax, told *The Armchair Detective*, "My L.A. Quartet and 'American Tabloid' are designed to give crime fiction and violent intrigue back to the men who would really have perpetrated it—and they are *men* and they are *white men*. I see hardboiled crime fiction as a heavily ritualized transit horseshit and largely spun off of Raymond Chandler. Chandler is a very easy writer to imitate, which is why so many people have been able to adapt his formula with such success, but I hate that formula, and I hate its sensibility."

Chandler's strong presence on the page also accounts for the raft of revisionist versions (Robert Altman letting Elliott Gould out of the kennel to amble through "The Long Goodbye") and parodies (from S. J. Perelman's "Farewell, My Lovely Appetizer" to the movie "Dead Men Don't Wear Plaid"), which over time have jumbled into kitsch pastiche—a cartoon of smoldering intrigue. The value of the Library of America edition is that it takes you back to those Los Angeles parlors when the varnish was new and the characters were speaking their lines for the first time.

The Library of America's collected Raymond Chandler runs a total of two thousand two hundred and seventy-five pages, in two volumes ($35 each). It contains all his complete novels, a chunk of his pulp stories, his best-known essays, including "The Simple Art of Murder" and "Writers in Hollywood," the screenplay of James M. Cain's "Double Indemnity," and some of his letters. Posterity may approve of all the devotion, but I think paying this much homage to that much wordage has done him a disservice. Given that Chandler's novels are all still available in paperback, installing such inferiorities as "The High Window" and "The Little Sister" on the permanent shelf is profitless, ditto publishing the screenplay of "Double Indemnity," which, minus the urgent smack of Billy Wilder's direction and Barbara Stanwyck's platinum finish, loses its zing. The five hundred and eighty pages of Chandler's stories for *Black Mask* and other pulp mags is even more wasteful. Aside from the bravura opening of "Red Wind," the stories are generally no more interesting than the magazine garbage that Theodore Dreiser ground out between obstinate masterpieces. "Conant's face was a mask of fury. He balled his fist, took a jerky step forward. 'Why you —— damn louse ——.' " That is a typical moment from a story entitled "Guns at Cyrano's."

CHANDLER'S first Marlowe novel, "The Big Sleep" (1939), is the one betraying the least rust and sounding the loudest heartbeat of animal vitality. Like Ian Fleming, with whom he corresponded, Chandler came late to writing novels—the pulp stories were tuning-up exercises for a mind that had ripened. James Bond and Philip Marlowe were both life-size fantasy molds. Indeed, Chandler was reluctant to release publicity photos of himself, fearing that readers might be put off at finding that the tough guy they thought wrote the books was in fact an older, milder owl. Maturity aside, the chief advantage that Chandler had over the pulp hacks was his mastery of the establishing shot. He wrote an opening scene as if he were looking through a wide-angle lens. The description of the Sternwood mansion, with which "The Big Sleep" begins, still holds its spell: "Over the entrance doors, which would have let in a troop of Indian elephants, there was a broad stained-glass panel showing a knight in dark armor rescuing a lady who was tied to a tree and didn't have any clothes on but some very long and convenient hair." So does Marlowe's interview with General Sternwood in the greenhouse, a fungus palace where the pale stalks suggest "the newly washed fingers of dead men" and the orchids smell like prostitutes.

As everyone knows, the story in "The Big Sleep" is bumpy with potholes (Chandler himself couldn't keep track of all the body traffic), but it doesn't matter; the novel barrels along on the nervous energy of a writer who has found his way out of hack formula and into his own personal terrain. Like Howard Hawks' 1946 film version, which remains the best adaptation of a Chandler novel ("The Long Goodbye" is more Altman than Chandler), the novel has the roomy ease and confidence of improvised jazz, free of the world-weariness that barbiturated the genre later, when the private eye became a stand-in for the existentialist living in a place without order, honor, or decent coffee. "The Big Sleep" also has a frisky air, with Marlowe establishing his credentials as a leg man ("The calves were beautiful, the ankles long and slim and with enough melodic line for a tone poem") and dishing out wisecracks ("Her face fell apart like a bride's pie crust") as if dealing from a fresh deck. The warning signals of self-caricature are sounded in the clever banter, where one can hear the dentures click:

> "Cute, aren't I?" she said.
> I said harshly: "Cute as a Filipino on Saturday night."

"The Big Sleep" was followed, in 1940, by "Farewell, My Lovely," which was almost called " 'Zounds, He Dies," forsooth. Another novel with outstanding set pieces (like the chapter beginning "The room was full of smoke," where Marlowe's concussion conjures a trance state), "Farewell, My Lovely" was the one mystery novel that Edmund Wilson singled out for stingy praise in his famous essay "Who Cares Who Killed Roger Ackroyd?" (first published in *The New Yorker*). Even so, when he came to the end of "Farewell, My Lovely" he experienced the diminuendo effect he felt with all mystery novels: "Because here again, as is so often the case, the explanation of the mysteries, when it comes, is neither interesting nor plausible enough. It fails to justify the excitement produced by the picturesque and sinister happenings, and I cannot help feeling cheated."

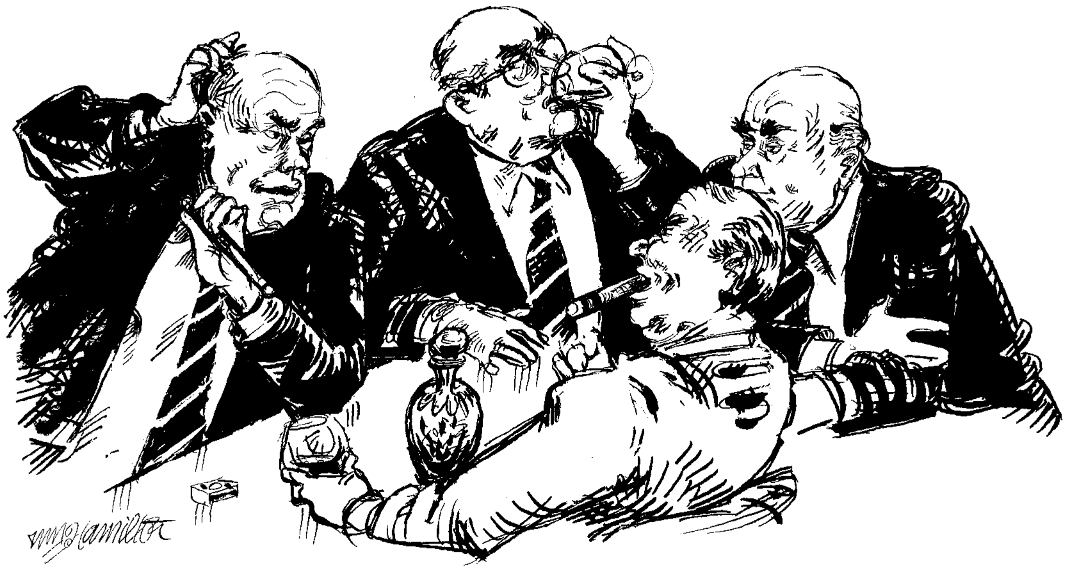
In an era in which Patricia Cornwell conducts autopsy reports so thorough that the dead function as data banks, Elmore Leonard tattoos sleaze in the tropical colors of Hawaiian shirts, James Ellroy competes with Oliver Stone as the leading conspiracy theorist of late capitalism, Ed McBain turns the Eighty-seventh Precinct into Hieronymus Bosch, and Walter Mosley squires us (in his Easy Rawlins novels) through the Negro neighborhoods of postwar Los Angeles which lay on the outskirts of Marlowe's world, Wilson's complaints about the pinched focus of the detective novel sound fuddy-duddy. These days, we're less likely to feel cheated than overwhelmed by the wild variety of what the detective novel can do. Where Chandler insisted in his essay "Notes on the Mystery Story" that "the murderer must not be a loony," we've become accustomed to sociopaths and psychopaths pruning the populace as serial killers. Kinky sadism has become part of the everyday. The skullduggery in Chandler's novels seems admirably devoid of sick kicks compared with the hip nihilism of "Pulp Fiction" and "American Psycho." He wrote as though pain hurt and life mattered.

But if Wilson's complaints about the detective novel have been outstripped by research-and-development in the field, that doesn't mean he was wrong about Chandler's limitations. Rereading "Farewell, My Lovely" and its successors, one shares Wilson's vision of dying quail as Marlowe's guided tour of the life styles of the rich and shameless narrows into a concern with cracking the case so that he can lumber back to his lonely office and do his jaw-firming exercises. The beautiful, deep-dyed descriptive passages of buildings, botanical life, rainfall, and car drives at night which one remembers best from Chandler are almost detachable from the logistical labor of getting Marlowe from Point A to Point B. Closing the case invariably involves talky explanations, and the dialogue seems rattled off from crib notes: "You didn't tell me about Brunette or the cards that were in those reefers or Amthor or Dr. Sonderborg or that little clue that set you on the path of the great solution," Anne Riordan, the sex interest in "Farewell, My Lovely," babbles in the novel's penultimate chapter. Although "Farewell, My Lovely" was only Marlowe's second outing, his persona is already being discussed in terms of the quixotic. After he answers Riordan's query about the cards in the reefers, etc., she mocks him in that special mocking way women have:

> "You're so marvelous," she said. "So brave, so determined and you work for so little money. Everybody bats you over the head and chokes you and smacks your jaw and fills you with morphine, but you just keep right on hitting between tackle and end until they're all worn out. What makes you so wonderful?"
> "Go on," I growled. "Spill it."
> Anne Riordan said thoughtfully: "I'd like to be kissed, damn you!"

Everything in Chandler is aimed right at the kisser.

THE novel that is Chandler's most overt fumble for truth and his most earnest effort to bend the prison bars of the genre is "The Long Goodbye," published in this country in 1954. Written while his wife, Cissy, was dying, "The Long Goodbye" took more out of him than any other book. "I watched my wife die by half-inches and I wrote my best book in the agony of that knowledge," he confided in a letter. After Cissy's death, he drank even more heavily than usual and, in this depression, attempted suicide. Although another novel ("Playback") followed, "The Long Goodbye" carries the parchment seal of a last testament. The novel is a study in loyalty and betrayal, its object lesson being an alcoholic named Terry Lennox, whose surgically repaired face is a shattered mirror of Marlowe's (and Chandler's). Indeed, "The Long Goodbye" is a double mirror, its other reflection belonging to Roger Wade, a mountain-size novelist whose creative



"What I wouldn't give to be young and deregulated right about now."

powers have crumbled. Like Lennox and Chandler, Wade is a heavy boozer. The novel thus dramatizes Chandler's fear of being a broken-down drunk and a spent force. It's also his way of confronting his place in the American canon, Terry Lennox being an F. Scott Fitzgerald boy-angel, beautiful and damned, while Roger Wade compares himself to Fitzgerald but behaves like Hemingway. (In Altman's version, Wade was played by Sterling Hayden, in full Papa beard.) "The Long Goodbye" requires more psychological insight than earlier Marlowes. In the past, Marlowe could play off cheap hoods and classy dames as if they were bumpers in a pinball machine. Here Chandler has to create foes and allies that have a rounded existence independent of Marlowe's.

He isn't up to it. Of the two alter egos, Wade is the more clumsily realized—a deflated blowhard spouting about what a fraud he is, like a ham actor holding court. The novel is marred by the kind of rhetorical posturing from Marlowe that miffed Kingsley Amis. While cooling his heels at the Wade estate, Marlowe reflects, "I might even have got rich—small-town rich, an eight-room house, two cars in the garage, chicken every Sunday and the *Reader's Digest* on the living room table, the wife with a cast iron permanent and me with a brain like a sack of Portland cement. You take it, friend. I'll take the big sordid dirty crooked city." Many consider "The Long Goodbye" Chandler's autumnal masterpiece, but the only part I enjoyed reading this second time was a funny riff that Marlowe does on the different categories of blondes—an instant lecture in pop anthropology which recalls the unforced momentum of "The Big Sleep." After doing justice to alcoholic blondes and perky blondes, Marlowe muses:

> There is the pale, pale blonde with anemia of some non-fatal but incurable type. She is very languid and very shadowy and she speaks softly out of nowhere and you can't lay a finger on her because in the first place you don't want to and in the second place she is reading "The Waste Land" or Dante in the original, or Kafka or Kierkegaard or studying Provençal. She adores music and when the New York Philharmonic is playing Hindemith she can tell you which one of the six bass viols came in a quarter of a beat too late. I hear Toscanini can also. That makes two of them.

The paragraph closes like a clasp.

After "The Long Goodbye," there wasn't anything left to do with Marlowe but pair him off with a marriageable woman and watch him squirm. Chandler's last completed novel, "Playback" (the posthumous "Poodle Springs" was completed by Robert B. Parker), is a halfhearted effort in which he goes sentimental on us with love scenes too goopy to quote, yet it's somehow gratifying that Marlowe remains a leg man to the end: "Still satisfied with my legs?" his future fiancée, Linda Loring, asks dreamily, and although Marlowe makes a flip reply, you know he's thinking, Yes, yes, a million times yes. When Marlowe deflects her proposal of marriage by saying, "I'm a tired hack with a doubtful future," it's clear who's really doing the talking. A year after "Playback" was published, Raymond Chandler died in California, on March 26, 1959.

THE Library of America edition concludes with a selection of Chandler's letters. When a book of Chandler's complete letters, edited by Frank MacShane, was published, in 1981, the critic and mystery maven Julian Symons praised their lively touches but said that no one who read them would think the better of Chandler himself afterward. The letters, he said, tar Chandler as coarse, competitive, and anti-intellectual. To me, they had a tonic effect. Far from being disillusioning, the letters portray Chandler as an old pro taking a breather in the corner between rounds. Alternately belligerent and touchingly generous, he surfaces in his correspondence as an appealing sorehead, touchy about his turf, fretful of his status, proud of his flair for the verbal jugular. The writer he most reminds me of is John O'Hara, another pugnacious workhorse. (O'Hara's defiant boast "I don't consult dictionaries, dictionaries consult me" finds its echo in Chandler's "When I split an infinitive, God damn it, I split it so it will stay split.") Many of the letters that offended Symons with their slurs are excluded from the Library of America edition—no great loss. It would be unfair and mistaken, though, to leave the impression that Chandler was a one-man defamation league. A grim wisecrack like "Los Angeles has nothing for me anymore. It's only a question of time until a Gentile has to wear

IN THE CONCERT HALLS

BOWLES IS BACK

PAUL BOWLES, who arrives in New York next week to attend a festival of his music presented by the Eos Ensemble, last visited the city in 1969. There had been a huge snowstorm, and garbage was piling up along the streets—it seemed to the writer-composer all too apt a symbol of what the city had become. For him, the end had set in years earlier, after the war. "My idea of people at the time was Wasps," he said in a recent interview, "and I saw the city fill up with non-Americans." Ironic, then, that Bowles decamped to Tangier, a polyglot city that he had visited in the early thirties at the suggestion of Gertrude Stein—who, Bowles points out, had never known its winter weather—and that he has been connected with for half a century. His presence has attracted diverse seekers of expatriate aura. "I don't mind meeting people," he says, "even though half of them are people I've never seen before and will never see again. Most are lacking in charm."

Charm is a quality often associated with Bowles's music. Much of it was written between 1936 and 1948, for theatrical productions by such artists as John Houseman, Orson Welles, Lillian Hellman, and, especially, Tennessee Williams. Despite its use of jazz and non-Western forms, it tends toward emotional restraint; Bowles calls his compositions "climaxless." For the New York festival concerts, at Alice Tully Hall on September 19th and 21st (Bowles will also appear at a New School symposium on September 20th), the Eos Ensemble's conductor, Jonathan Sheffer, has devised programs that feature works ranging from the incidental music for "The Glass Menagerie" to the Concerto for Two Pianos and Orchestra. Bowles will be hearing some of the pieces for the first time. "That's why I'm crossing the ocean," he says. "I'm eighty-four, and I live in bed now, you know."

—BRENDAN LEMON

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Paul Bowles, Tangier, 1989.

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an armband there" is balanced by wry, worldly comments on Jews and other minorities which bear no resemblance to hate talk. More sorely missed are the passing shots Chandler took at the passing scene, such as his putdown of "A Place in the Sun" ("They ought to have called it 'Speedboats for Breakfast' ") and his horror at what passes for elegance in La Jolla ("Puce dinner jackets!").

The letters that are included in the Library of America edition mostly concern issues of craft and style, with an occasional outburst against those who deny that the private-eye genre has both. Of "The Maltese Falcon" Chandler wrote, "Frankly, I can conceive of better writing and a more tender and warm attitude to life, and a more flowery ending; but by God, if you can show me twenty books written approximately 20 years back that have as much guts and life now, I'll eat them between slices of Edmund Wilson's head." The last letter expresses Chandler's bewilderment over a comment made about a rival, John Dickson Carr—that Carr was good at plotting a book but hated the actual writing. "A writer who hates the actual writing, who gets no joy out of the creation of magic by words, to me is simply not a writer at all," Chandler exclaims. "The actual writing is what you live for. The rest is something you have to get through in order to arrive at the point. How can you hate the actual writing? . . . How can you hate the magic which makes of a paragraph or a sentence or a line of dialogue or a description something in the nature of a new creation?" In the best pages of the Marlowe novels, you can feel Chandler's creative pleasure; the lawns wet with rain seem minted in Heaven. In the worst pages, the mean streets that Marlowe walks echo with the hollow footsteps of a movie back lot. The bad pages may outnumber the good, but it's the good pages that stick, if you're lucky. Raymond Chandler was lucky. ♦

FLEETING BLISS

The last novel from a writer who understood loss.

BY DAVID REMNICK

Stanley Elkin

STANLEY ELKIN was born in Brooklyn, grew up in Chicago, and wrote in a shadow. On the NASDAQ index of Jewish-American Novelists, the successors to Isaac Singer's generation were the wildly various but invariably linked triumvirate of Bellow, Roth, and Malamud. For some reason, Elkin remained outside that select circle, and he felt the wound of the exclusion deeply. Struck across the maw with backhanded compliments ("a writers' writer") and then hit with a debilitating case of multiple sclerosis, Elkin once said archly about his terrible fortune, "All I've ever wanted, as I tell my friends, is to be rich and famous and to live forever without pain." Elkin died in May, not long after finishing his last novel and seventeenth book, the dark and sublime "Mrs. Ted Bliss" (Hyperion; $22.95).

"Mrs. Ted Bliss" reads as if Elkin had a pretty fair premonition that it would be his closing act. Dorothy Bliss, the widow of a Chicago butcher, the devoted mother of two grown children, and a woman who spent her first sixty-odd years scrubbing and scouring and cooking but almost never writing a check (her husband handled the money), now finds herself alone and grieving—"a candidate for death by heartbreak"—in a Miami condo. This is long after the Jewish glory days when "Wolfie's was Wolfie's"; this is a city in transition, in which the Jews are dying out, the delis have gone to seed, and Latino real-estate sharpies are buying up the neighborhood.

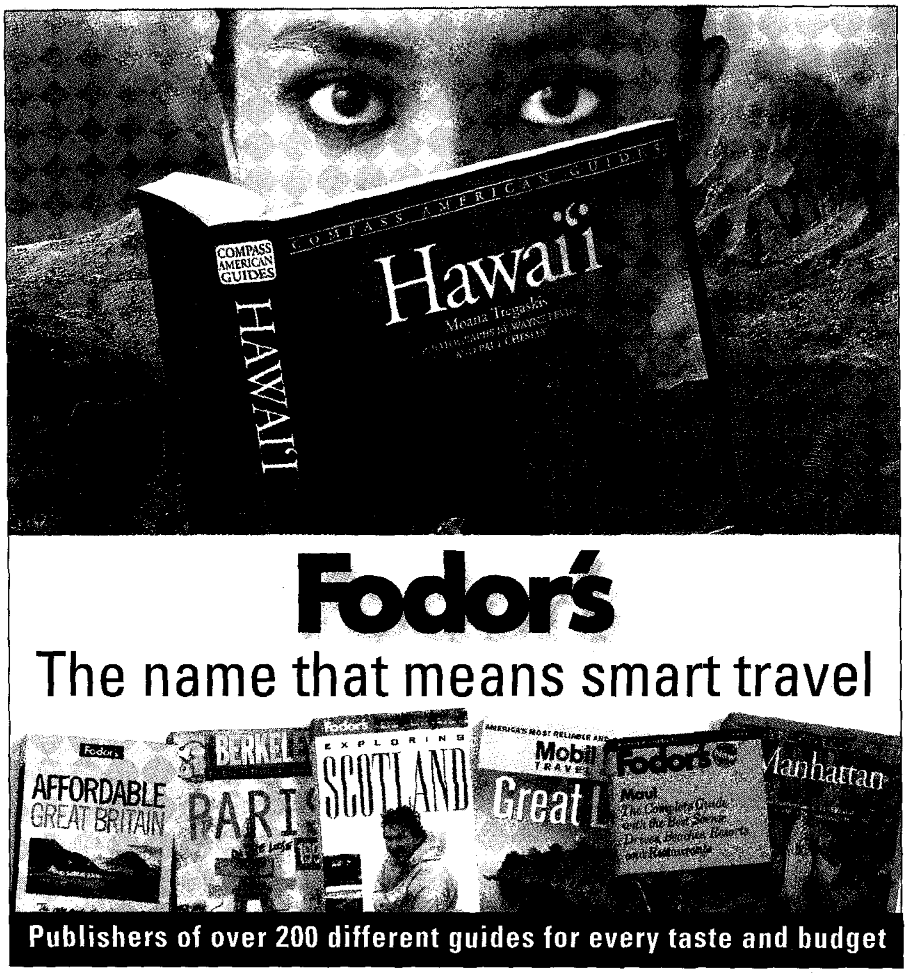
Mrs. Bliss is at a loss. Her condo complex offers "International Evening," "Hands Across the Panama Canal," "Good Neighbor Policy Night," and, of course, bingo, but life is desperately bland. Her most natural reflex—the innocent reflex of her generation to cater and defer to a husband—is useless, though she feels its tug all the time:

> Dorothy had not, beyond the universe of her own family, known all that many men, but even in her family had noticed the tendency of the women to leave the choicest cuts, ripest fruits, even the favorite most popular flavors of candy sourballs—the reds and purples, the greens and the oranges—for the men. The most comfortable chairs around the dining room table. The coldest water, the hottest soup, the last piece of cake.

Now she is left in solitude, clipping coupons and worrying about her fading looks.

Elkin was always a better portrait artist than storyteller (he even published a hilarious novel, "The MacGuffin," as a kind of tribute to his plotlessness), and here he sends his heroine into a series of accidental encounters, beginning with a drug dealer, who buys her Buick and her parking spot, and ending with a hurricane that sweeps across the city. While her sanctimonious children lecture her long-distance, Dorothy is off to visit a con in prison or the betting windows at the track; she even takes up an exhilarating flirtation with her late husband's shifty old business partner, Milton (Junior) Yellin.

"Mrs. Ted Bliss" is all about loss: the loss of family, the deterioration of one's own body and mind. This is nothing new in the work of Stanley Elkin. One of his novels, "The Magic Kingdom," was a comedy about terminally ill children marching off to Disney World. He is a writer who once remarked that "all books are the Book of Job." Certainly that is true of "Mrs. Ted Bliss." In this, the last of Elkin's books, Dorothy eventually figures out how to live a little for herself and to face what is coming. We leave her, in the end, staring down the hurricane. ♦



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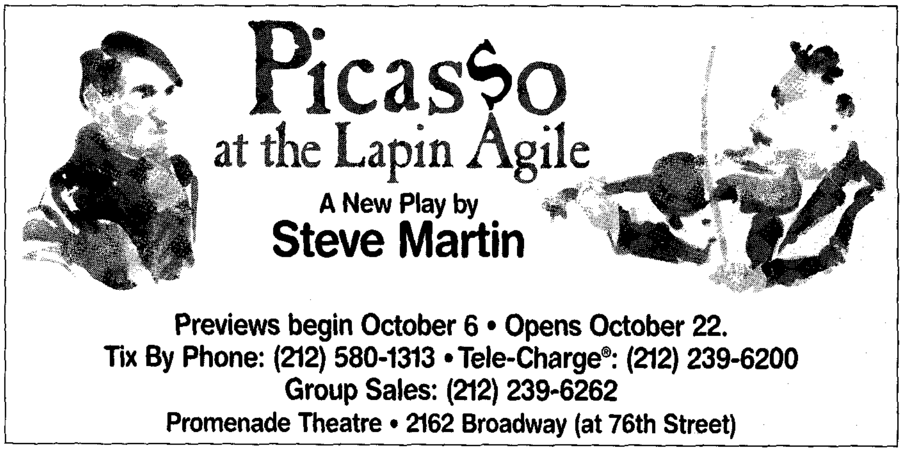

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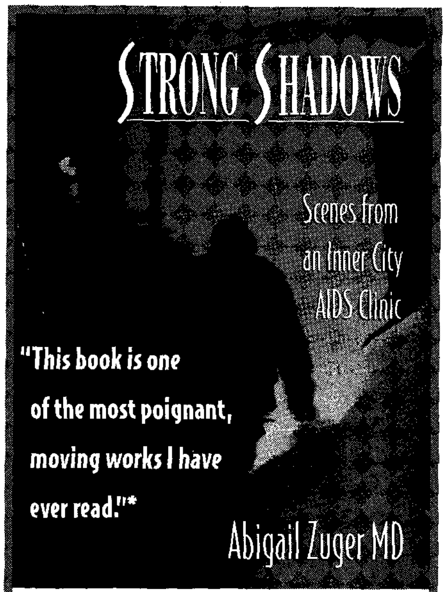
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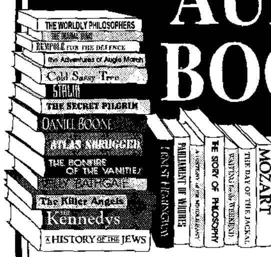
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RECOMMENDED READING

To the Wedding
by John Berger
(*Pantheon*; $22)

The story is a simple, ancient, and celebratory one: as bride and groom prepare for their wedding, the families journey to the seaside feast. Berger's alert contemporary touches, such as the fact that the bride is H.I.V.-positive, only make the heart swell more fiercely. The groom's father gives his careful blessing, and the bride's separated parents choose gifts: her Czech mother picks a mechanical birdcall, her French father selects a perfume ("Say you had a daughter and you loved her and you wanted her to have everything immediately . . ."). Berger's story is so sad that you throw the book down, and so convincingly beautiful that you pick it up again.

The Choir
by Joanna Trollope
(Random House; $22)

The all-boy choir at Aldminster Cathedral is blessed with a cheerfully ferocious choirmaster, a magnificent seventeenth-century organ, and a celestial new treble in the earthly guise of eleven-year-old Henry Ashworth. But the choir also costs the diocese more than fifty thousand pounds a year, which the dean thinks might be better spent elsewhere—on new lighting, perhaps—and a delicious cathedral-town battle about tradition and privilege ensues. Almost all the characters in this companionable novel are on speaking terms with God, but His will, while frequently consulted, is variously interpreted.

Naming the Spirits
by Lawrence Thornton
(Doubleday; $22.95)

In this sequel to his haunting novel "Imagining Argentina," Thornton returns to Buenos Aires just after the *Proceso*, when the generals have been imprisoned and the difficult search for the *desaparecidos* continues. The lone survivor of a massacre, a girl who was shot and left for dead in a field, remains in an aphasic state: she is unable to remember her name, her past, or even the existence of the twelve bodies that lie buried in an unmarked pampas grave. Narrated in the collective voice of the victims—the spirits of the title—and interwoven with excruciating individual testimonies, Thornton's book resurrects the nameless dead, restoring their identities, their stories, and their dignity.

Rookery Blues
by Jon Hassler
(Ballantine; $23)

Rookery is the name of a northern Minnesota state college where five faculty members get together to play the blues as well as endure them. The group—a beautiful singer, a tormented artist, a woebegone novelist, and two English teachers—includes a love triangle, and political strains arise as the members take different sides in a strike. Set in 1969, it feels like 1959—in large part because of its old-fashioned, four-square, apolitical humanism.

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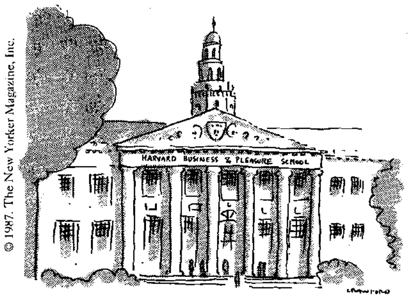
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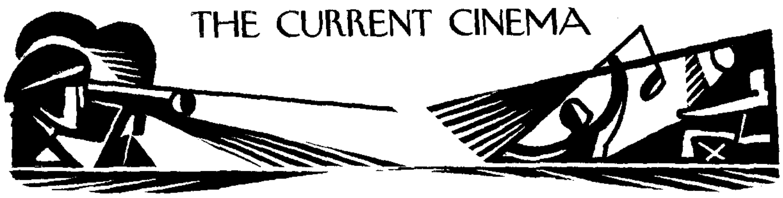


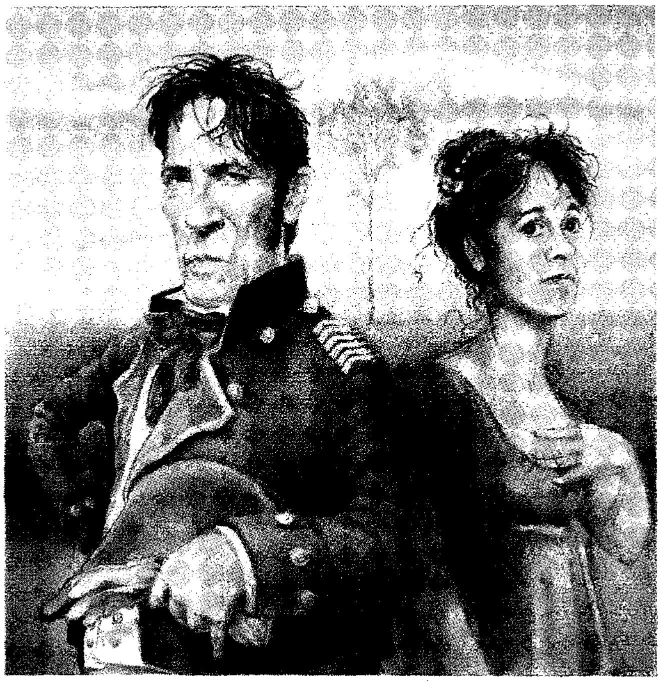
THE CURRENT CINEMA

JANE'S WORLD

Costume drama gets a shakeup in a new adaptation of "Persuasion."

BY ANTHONY LANE

"FIVE charming sisters on the gayest, merriest manhunt that ever snared a bewildered bachelor! Girls! Take a lesson from these husband hunters!" That is how M-G-M promoted "Pride and Prejudice" back in 1940. I guess the plug was written by someone at the studio, although I like to think that they brought Jane Austen out of retirement and flew her in to help with the publicity. After that, she went quiet for a while, probably got a house out in the Hollywood Hills. Now she's back, and this time it's huge. We have already had "Clueless," a modernized spinoff from "Emma," and a period version of the same book is on the way; in England, the BBC is about to screen its new "Pride and Prejudice"; and Ang Lee has a "Sense and Sensibility" in the offing. All in all, Austen mania is the most widely publicized media growth industry since the advent of rap. I eagerly await the day when Bob Dole lays into Emma Woodhouse for promoting sexual interest between young people—hardly more than children, some of them—without giving sufficient weight to her own family-building responsibilities. The only thing that could slow the craze down is the unfortunate fact that it will soon run out of source material. Then, presumably, it will be the turn of Mrs. Gaskell to get it in the neck.



Jane Austen's twin souls: Frederick Wentworth (Ciaran Hinds) and Anne Elliot (Amanda Root) fall in love again.

It is hard to believe that the Jane Austen trend will throw up anything better than Roger Michell's "Persuasion," which opens on September 27th. Whether the trend will survive the movie is another matter. Michell, the young British director who made "The Buddha of Suburbia" (screened at the Public last winter), has made it his business to roughen and dampen the Austen world into a state of nervous desperation. The social order holds, but only on sufferance. When Sir Walter Elliot (Corin Redgrave) leaves his country estate, he passes blithely along a row of footmen. In a fleeting series of closeups, we see their faces—immobile except for the eyes, which follow their master with a sturdy contempt. The tale that Michell tells is still a comedy, but not a light comedy; it is still a period picture, in which women's dresses run from neck to ankle, but for once you notice how the hems drag up mud on a ramble. And the heroine should really do something about her hair. For those reared on Merchant-Ivory films, it could come as a shock to realize that styling mousse was not available over the counter in 1814.

Jane Austen devotees, too, will probably take one look at this picture and drop the sugar tongs; but they will be missing the point of Michell's homage. If he wants his film of "Persuasion" to ruffle the habits of costume drama, that is because the novel does something comparable—it deepens and confuses our apprehension of Jane Austen. The earlier books set such store by fine manners that it's alarming to find her not merely loosening her respect for them but hinting that they are popularly used as cover for emotional atrocities. Anyone who knows "Persuasion" tends to know it well, perhaps because it's all about the renewing of acquaintances, the stoking of old flames: it somehow sets an example to the reader, who comes back to the story in the hope of further bliss, as the hero does to his beloved. The plot is curiously post hoc, the exact opposite of the delicious anticipation that lifts "Pride and Prejudice": you sense that everything vital about "Persuasion" has occurred in advance—hence the autumnal air that is draped over the whole proceedings, a suspicion that the hours of happiness are growing short. It wouldn't do to lay this gloom on too thick; given that the characters include three sisters in varying degrees of frustration, Michell must have been tempted to produce a kind of Regency "Cries and Whispers," but he sensibly opts for the odd, glancing image of leaves being raked and burned, and of trees on the turn.

Eight years before the action begins, Anne Elliot (Amanda Root) fell in love with Frederick Wentworth (Ciaran Hinds), a captain in the British Navy. She was persuaded by her confidante, a family friend named Lady Russell (Susan Fleetwood), to give the Captain up as a bad thing—an impoverished thing, in other words, a thing without connections. "A man who had nothing but himself to recommend him," Lady Russell says of Wentworth, failing triumphantly to understand that nothing else matters. And now the suitor is back, still looking rather stunned. It would take an entire grove of family trees to explain why he is back, but the upshot is that he and Anne are thrown together again. Even if you've never read the book, you will catch their drift: they must circle back to the passionate point that they reached so long ago, while trying not to hit too many of the obstacles in their path.

The obstacles include Louisa Musgrove (Emma Roberts), who fancies herself in love with Wentworth; William Elliot (Samuel West), a young swell who wears a good green tailcoat and claims to be in love with Anne; and, offstage, Napoleon, whose war with England has made Wentworth a wealthy man (ships' captains used to claim the value of captured enemy vessels), and who may yet require his presence in a fresh fight. Then, there is Anne's father, whose monomania makes Bonaparte look like a wincing wallflower. Sir Walter has a connoisseur's nose for blue blood, for its vintage and finesse; he is the last word in snobbery—and Jane Austen's final say on the matter, too, for "Persuasion" was published only after her death. As if unshackled from custom by her illness, she no longer stands on ceremony with her creations, and spares no sympathy for Sir Walter on the simple ground that he shows none for Anne. He is a monster, and a gift to any actor. On hearing that Louisa Musgrove, who is related to him by marriage, was badly injured in an accident, Sir Walter looks amazed—offended, even—that anyone should think of troubling him with such news. "Oh," he sniffs. "Farmer's daughter."

For those attempting to dramatize Jane Austen or to play her characters onscreen, she can be embarrassingly generous—almost up to Dickens level—with her covert stage directions. (This could be a clue to her current popularity in Hollywood. It's not her small world that appeals; it's the big help that she offers you in fleshing it out. She's her own script editor, virtually her own director—and it's all free.) Indeed, Michell's "Persuasion" feels closer to David Lean's great Dickens movies than it does to the sedate chattiness of most Austen adaptations. It has something of Lean's willingness to skirt the brink of caricature and stop an inch short; something, too, of his suggestion that in a society driven by bluster virtue is most likely to reside in the tacit and the diligent. There are moments in "Persuasion," surges of near-fatal feeling, when the world blanks out around Anne. At her first sight of Wentworth, for example, the conversation of others seems to flow around her and leave her stranded in silence. The camera moves in swiftly toward her face, as if to test for signs of life; all that stirs is her hand, curling around the back of a chair. The same thing happens during Louisa's fall; normal life is suspended, and the world softens to an ominous rustle. In each case, a woman is struck dumb: one by a crack on the head, the other by a blow to the heart.

At first, you scarcely notice Anne; she is a slip of a thing, a ghost at the back of the drawing room. Looking at her lankness and pallor, her aura of muted rebellion, you find yourself thinking of "The Piano"—and Michell appears to borrow from Jane Campion in the opening shot of his movie, when a boat's hull splits calm water. The rest of "Persuasion" gently pushes Anne to the forefront, but even then she looks discomforted by her prominence. All of which means that some viewers will find Amanda Root's performance just too shrunken and scared; they may prefer their Jane Austen heroines to be quick on the draw, as clear and ringing as a wineglass. But Root is timing her act; she knows that Anne is destined to bloom late, and that there's no use forcing a miracle. Besides, she is as much a point of view as a source of strength; she exists to scan a scene while others clump and bray around it, and the fun of "Persuasion" lies in seeing the supporting actors turn up the throttle while Root is parked at the side. None is better than Sophie Thompson (sister of Emma), who plays Anne's sister Mary—a snapping wife, a useless mother, a ravenous hypochondriac ("I am *so ill*"), yet by no means a wicked woman. Whereas Anne is threatened by the dead hand of saintliness, Mary is alive with shortcomings; the movie makes room for both of them. There is more tolerance and fresh air in it than you might expect: people wander off on walks and skim stones at the seaside, and don't really give a damn that someone—someone morally clear-headed, like a sister or an author—is watching them with such care.

THE narrative divides into clean segments. There is the family home, which Anne leaves in order to stay with Mary; then the sunlit interlude on the coast; and finally the town house rented by the Elliots in Bath, where the twin souls are finally glued together. Michell greets each setting with a defiant key shift in visual tone. The country smacks of low ceilings and lower light; when Anne stands contented in the internal dusk of a cottage, you are reminded of the cramped quarters of a ship—precisely where she dreams of ending up. Bath, on the other hand, is pure sci-fi: a nightmare of bright white walls, hard floors, idlers reclining and promenading like androids. Michell's camera, often hand held, never stops; he grabs at people on the move, or spies them through windows and doorways. When Anne, near the end, walks into a game of whist and waits for Frederick, the candles in the room seem to haze and roar; they look like hellfire, or like underwater flares, and, indeed, the crowd at the card tables, oblivious of the lovers' secret, smiles and gestures with sluggish, submarine grace. The world is not playing but drowning.

Occasionally, the movie goes too far. There are times when its clutching at modern sensibilities makes scant historical sense; if you're going to show Anne and Frederick kissing in the *street*—a street in *Bath*, of all places—you might as well go the whole hog and have them perform oral sex in the Pump Room. But the kiss is just a romantic sop; far more fraught, and more convincing, is Michell's over-all reading of Jane Austen's mood—the skill with which his movie takes the moral temperature of the novel. You look at Amanda Root and you see how patience has shifted into neurosis, how niceties have condensed into suffocation; the battle of wits is now a fight to the death. Heaven knows what M-G-M would have made of Anne Elliot: "One smarting spinster with the longest, loneliest memory that ever snared a saddened sailor! Girls! Take a lesson from this party hater!" We fancy ourselves perfectly placed to pick up the distress signals sent out by "Persuasion," with its tartness and well-trimmed melancholy. That is how we take our Jane Austen these days. If we are wrong, we cannot help it; we cannot conceive that anyone as long-suffering as Jane Austen could also be so funny. Her balance is beyond us; however good a person we may think she was, she was better. ♦

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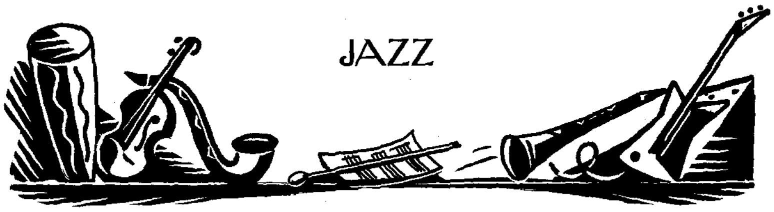
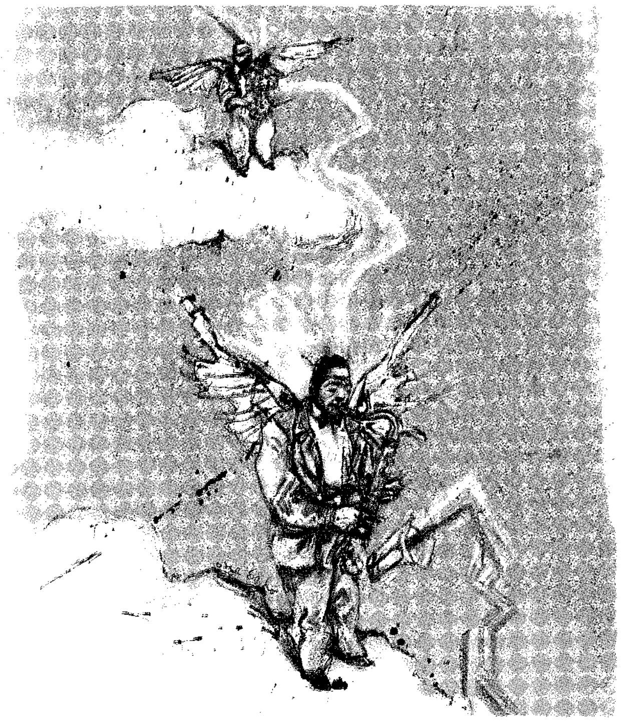


GIANT STEPS

Major reissues of the music of John Coltrane, god of the neo-hard-boppers.

BY WHITNEY BALLIETT

CHARLIE PARKER and John Coltrane formed a revolutionary continuum. Parker's career took shape in the mid-forties and lasted until 1955, when he died, at the age of thirty-four. Coltrane began his rise in the mid-fifties and died in 1967, at the age of forty. Between them, the two saxophonists picked jazz up and hurled it into the future. Parker studied Lester Young and Art Tatum, and the blues players and singers in his native Kansas City. He invented a fearless new lyrical style, which came in three parts: his slow blues, full of preaching and plaintiveness, a true "down" music; his slow ballads, which became eerily original hymns; and his up-tempo variations on tunes like "Cherokee" and "I Got Rhythm," in which he sped through a sea of altered chords and eighth and sixteenth notes, tossing overboard the old 4/4 pleasantries of swing and making you listen harder than you had ever listened before. But while Parker was constructing his magnificent music he was busy dismantling himself, and before he died there wasn't much of him that still worked. He was both revered and widely ignored, and any mystique that might have gathered around him would have made him laugh. Coltrane also came in three parts: slow blues that were not unlike Parker's but which moved inward rather than outward; slow, highly melodic ballads that, like Parker's recordings with strings, suggested ruminations instead of improvisations; and his feverish up-tempo excursions, in which he piled chords on top of chords, seemed to play two or three notes at once, fashioned wild wheels of notes, and, in a previously unknown saxophone upper register, became a screeching animal.



Parker and Coltrane: hurling jazz into the future.

OSCAR GRILLO

Parker was a primitive next to Coltrane. Preoccupied with drugs and other diversions, he lounged in and out of music; Coltrane was obsessed by it. He wanted to create a new music—a new medium, almost—and he pursued his vision by studying Indian music, Spanish music, and African music. He listened to every saxophonist from Don Byas and Johnny Hodges to Parker and Dexter Gordon, from Sonny Stitt and Ornette Coleman to Sonny Rollins and John Gilmore. Byas, pillowy at slow tempos and demonic at fast tempos, moved to Europe after the Second World War. He once told the drummer Arthur Taylor, "Trane and I were tight. Every time he came to Europe, the first place he would go to, he would ask, 'Where is Don Byas?' Always went where I was playing, never said hello. . . . He would sit in the club all night long and never move. I wouldn't know he was there. I'd say to myself, That looks like Trane sitting back there. So when the set was over, I would go and ask, 'How long have you been here?' He'd say, 'I just came in.' "

Charlie Parker is a distant, though still celebrated, figure now, but Coltrane has never fallen into abeyance. He was idolized at the time of his death, and he is the current god of most of the young, teeming neo-hard-boppers, to say nothing of their elders. Appropriately, the reissue mills are going strong.

Rhino Records has just released a seven-CD set, "The Heavyweight Champion: John Coltrane, The Complete Atlantic Recordings." Coltrane was with Atlantic from January of 1959 until May of 1961, and it was largely a transitional time for him: he had his first "hits" ("Giant Steps" and "My Favorite Things"); he took up the soprano saxophone, inspired by Sidney Bechet; and his new quartet began recording. (Rhino has had the good sense to reissue the Atlantic material in the exact order in which it was recorded, and not in the hodgepodge way the original albums were put together.) With only six months of Coltrane's contract left, the Atlantic tracks began to take off. There are wondrous slow blues, like "Village Blues" (two takes), "Blues to Elvin," and "Blues to Bechet," this last notable for Jones's merciless foot-pedal work, snare accents, and flooding cymbals; a fractured, caroming "Summertime"; and two lovely ballads, "Central Park West" and "Every Time We Say Goodbye." In these sessions, devices he would use again and again come to the fore—vamps, ground basses, a kind of circular rhythm, and long duets with Elvin Jones.

Impulse! has brought out four releases taken from its archives: a three-CD set entitled "A John Coltrane Retrospective: The Impulse! Years" and reissues of the albums "A Love Supreme," "John Coltrane and Johnny Hartman," and "Ballads: The John Coltrane Quartet." The Impulse! CDs—true, mature Coltrane—begin a few days before his Atlantic contract ran out, and end several months before his death. The first number is a ten-minute inside-out version of "Greensleeves," which, compared with Coleman Hawkins's noble, impassioned recording, clearly suggests the distant ether that Coltrane was already breathing. The final number, "Offering," lasts more than eight minutes and is shaped like an arc. It begins with a misterioso Coltrane theme (he had a headful of them), locks into a furious cycle of circular arpeggios, double notes, and strangulated sounds—a surging mass seemingly played on an unknown celestial instrument—and ends with the same theme, delivered with deep, foghorn notes. Elsewhere on the "Retrospective" CDs, Coltrane uses more and more incantation, on numbers like "Alabama," "Spiritual," "Crescent," and "Dear Lord," and he also allows a disturbing aspect of his work to surface: he sometimes became so obsessed with getting all those notes out that he didn't swing. On the thirteen-minute "Spiritual," recorded live at the Village Vanguard in 1961, he plays a pleasant, almost motionless soprano-saxophone solo, then gives way to the ingenious Eric Dolphy on bass clarinet, and suddenly the number begins to move.

Coltrane tried to describe some of his methods in a *Down Beat* interview in 1960. "I was trying for a sweeping sound," he said. "I started experimenting because I was striving for more individual development. I even tried long, rapid lines that Ira Gitler termed 'sheets of sound' at that time. But actually, I was beginning to apply the three-on-one chord approach, and at that time the tendency was to play the entire scale of each chord. Therefore, they were usually played fast and sometimes sounded like glisses. I found there were a certain number of chord progressions to play in a given time, and sometimes what I played didn't work out in eighth notes, sixteenth notes, or triplets. I had to put the notes in uneven groups like fives and sevens in order to get them all in. I thought in groups of notes, not of one note at a time."

Very little in Coltrane's playing was accidental. In night clubs, he practiced before sets and between sets, and when he went into the recording studio he arrived an hour early and rehearsed everything he planned to play. The longtime Atlantic Records engineer Tom Dowd says in the liner notes to the Rhino reissue, "He would stand in a corner, face the wall, play, stop, change reeds, and start again. After a while, he would settle on the mouthpiece and reed that felt most comfortable to him, and then he would start to work on the 'runs' that he wanted to use during the session. I would watch him play the same passage over and over again, changing his breathing, his fingering, and experimenting with the most minute changes in his phrasing. . . . As the rest of the band members started to arrive, he would nod a greeting but never stop playing."

VISIONARIES rarely leave clear tracks. Coltrane was born poor in Hamlet, North Carolina, in 1926, and reared in

TOUCH ME

Summer is late, my heart.
Words plucked out of the air
some forty years ago
when I was wild with love
and torn almost in two
scatter like leaves this night
of whistling wind and rain.
It is my heart that's late,
it is my song that's flown.
Outdoors all afternoon
under a gunmetal sky
staking my garden down,
I kneeled to the crickets trilling
underfoot as if about
to burst from their crusty shells;
and like a child again
marvelled to hear so clear
and brave a music pour
from such a small machine.
What makes the engine go?
Desire, desire, desire.
The longing for the dance
stirs in the buried life.
One season only,
                    and it's done.
So let the battered old willow
thrash against the windowpanes
and the house timbers creak.
Darling, do you remember
the man you married? Touch me,
remind me who I am.

—STANLEY KUNITZ

High Point. In an interview that appears in the Rhino liner notes, his cousin and lifelong friend Mary Alexander is asked whether his family had any notion that he would be an artist, and she gives a blunt answer that sums up a philosophy once prevalent among Post-Reconstruction black Americans: “No, nobody thought anybody was going to be anything.” Coltrane took up the alto saxophone, and after he moved to Philadelphia with his family, in 1943, he worked for King Kolax and the blues shouter Eddie (Cleanhead) Vinson. He had switched permanently to tenor by the time Dizzy Gillespie hired him, in the late forties; he had also started to drink and use drugs, and Gillespie finally had to let him go. In 1954, he joined Johnny Hodges, who was on the only sabbatical he ever took from Duke Ellington's band, and Hodges left a lasting, if subtle, mark on him.

A year later, Coltrane joined Miles Davis, who was just coming into his own, and it was then that his career really began. He recorded (unevenly) with Davis, but he was still messed up, and Davis fired him on more than one occasion. He nearly died of a drug overdose in San Francisco, and when he recovered he quit drinking and drugs and took up God, wavering only briefly thereafter. In 1959, Davis rehired him, and he was on the famous “Kind of Blue” album. Soon after, he left Davis, and, buoyant and full of strength, put together his celebrated quartet—McCoy Tyner on piano, Jimmy Garrison on bass, and Elvin Jones on drums—which stayed together for much of the rest of his life. It is not clear how much Coltrane's home life meant to him. He was married twice, first to Naima Grubbs and then to the pianist Alice McCloud, who bore him three sons. He died unexpectedly, of a liver ailment, in Huntington, Long Island, where he had just bought a house.

MUSIC can only suggest. It can't be religious or political or patriotic or programmatic. But Coltrane's thirty-two-minute “A Love Supreme” is an ardent attempt, full of incantation and even vocal chanting, to thank God for his blessings, to present him with Coltrane's very soul. The six ballads he recorded with the exquisite singer Johnny Hartman and the eight ballads done with his quartet raise another thought about Coltrane. All these beautiful numbers are reverent, melodic interpretations, free of affectation and sentimentality. But do they represent the *real* Coltrane—the peaceful, lyrical, big-toned, God-loving Coltrane, the Coltrane who was never really comfortable belaboring us with unholy shrieks and double notes and chords piled on chords, like bales stacked in a warehouse?

After Coltrane, the hero of the Atlantic and Impulse! recordings is Elvin Jones, the greatest of all modern drummers. He holds Coltrane in his extraordinary hands in every number, pushing him gloriously in his longest solos, nipping at his heels in the slow numbers, perhaps in large part making him what he was. Jones once said of Coltrane: “He left me absolutely alone. He must have felt the way I played, understood the validity of it. There was never any rhythmic or melodic or harmonic conflicts. . . . I was never conscious of the length of Coltrane's solos, which sometimes lasted forty minutes. I was in the position of being able to follow his melodic line through all the modes he would weave in and out of, through all the patterns and the endless variations on variations. It was like listening to a concerto. The only thing that mattered was the completion of the cycle that he was in. I'd get so excited listening to him that I had all I could do to contain myself. There was a basic life force in Coltrane's solos, and when he came out of them you suddenly discovered you had learned a great deal.”

Toward the end of his life, Coltrane, photographed incessantly, began to look messianic. His long, handsome, still face, usually in profile, was as serious as stone—he might have been posing for “The Thinker”—and when he turned toward the camera he looked right into your head. I still agree with much of an appraisal I wrote of Coltrane the year after his death. Here is part of it: “Born poets like Coltrane sometimes misjudge the size of their gifts, and in trying to further them, to ennoble them, they fall over into sentimentality or the maniacal. Coltrane did both, and it is ironic that these lapses, which were mistakenly considered to be musical reflections of our inchoate times, drew his heaviest acclaim. People said they heard the dark night of the Negro in Coltrane's wildest music, but what they really heard was a heroic and unique lyrical voice at the mercy of its own power.”

On second thought, I would change “sentimentality” to “the romantic.” Coltrane was never mushy. ♦

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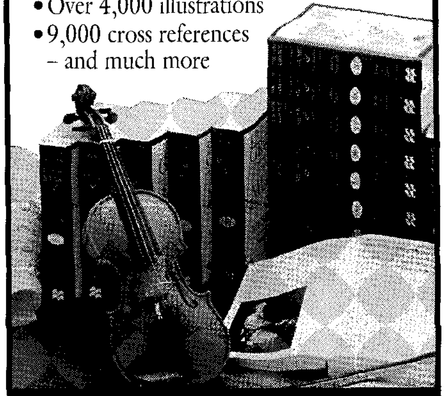

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Distributed by St. Martin's Press

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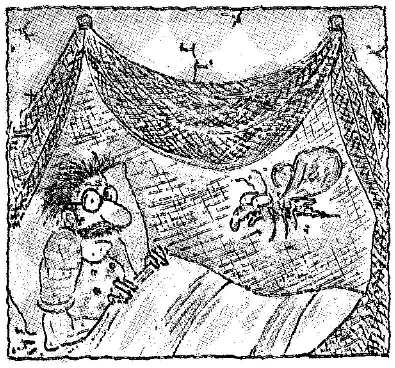
IN THE LEAD

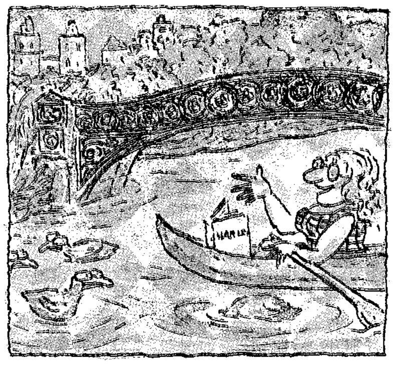
BY PHILIP HAMBURGER

ONCE upon a time, the lead of a newspaper story condensed what was to follow: the who, when, where, why of the dispatch. The idea was to tell the reader exactly what the story was about. No longer. These days, the creative lead is fashionable. The *Times,* keeping the record straight, goes in for this sort of thing on a daily basis. In fact, nothing would surprise us, including actually seeing any or all of the following leads in the morning paper:

LIMA, Sept. 15 — Field Marshal Hidalgo de Romero glanced at his toes, restless beneath the huge mosquito net that represented his clandestine authority, brushed a *Sarcophaga agricola* fly from his fly with a brutal oath, raised himself on his withered elbow, and cried out, "The revolution has begun!"



THIMBU, Bhutan, Sept. 10 — Rome has its Appian Way, Paris its Boulevard des Cappuccino, London its Old Lady on Threadbare Street, but to Lord Hollyhocks, His Majesty's Keeper of the Privy, there is more to life than bad architecture, sloppy writing, and libellous assaults on the family tree.



NEW YORK, Sept. 17 — Her scheme for playing Hamlet from a kayak in the Central Park Boat Lake having been vetoed by the Borough President, Blossom Heifetz finally broke her silence.

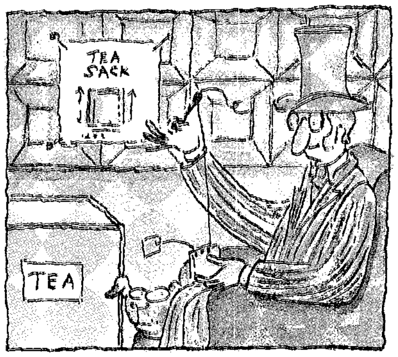
WASHINGTON, Sept. 17 — Washington, for the most part, lies below sea level. Thus the sobriquets Foggy Bottom, Sleepy Hollow, Noxious Newt, and so on. As a result of the general vapors spreading throughout the miasma, the question on the Hill is less who knew what when than what part original sin played in the web of intrigue leading from the Minority Leader's office to the question on everybody's lips: what has this to do with welfare reform as we know it?

BOSTON, Sept. 16 — Sergeant O'Reilly of the Twenty-first Precinct fought back tears. The two young men had been raised in the same neighborhood, went to the same school, prayed at the same church. Friday night, they met at the gun shop. "Hi" said Mike. "Hi" said Dave.

NEW YORK, Sept. 17 — Times Square has seen them come and Times Square has seen them go. Some come by night, some by day. Some wear hats, others go hatless. Occasionally, a turban bobs up, giving the scene an international flavor. Many are hungry, others are fat. The tall buildings cast ominous shadows. "Blessed are the ticket scalpers, for they shall inherit the theatre!" cried Benny.

LOS ANGELES, Sept. 14 — Mortal combat grips the neighborhood. Fearing for their very lives, bodega proprietors roll down the night shutters in bright daylight, clanging the neighborhood. Children hug their mothers' skirts. Strong men, ashen-faced, gulp their beer and head for home. "I insist," opined the Mayor yesterday, "it is not the heat."

WASHINGTON, Sept. 17 — No more small talk. No more big talk, either. Whispers, perhaps, and muffled innuendo, but full-throated legislative exclamations, according to the Senator's wife, have become as dead, to coin a phrase, as the dodo.



NEW YORK, Sept. 17 — Although those cultural icons the Gowanus Canal Minnesingers pay small attention to the vicissitudes of wind and weather, they display aspects of deep sensitivity to tides, forcing a change of venue for their forthcoming outdoor musical tribute to Sir Thomas Lipton, the question being "Did he, or did he not, invent the tea bag?" ♦

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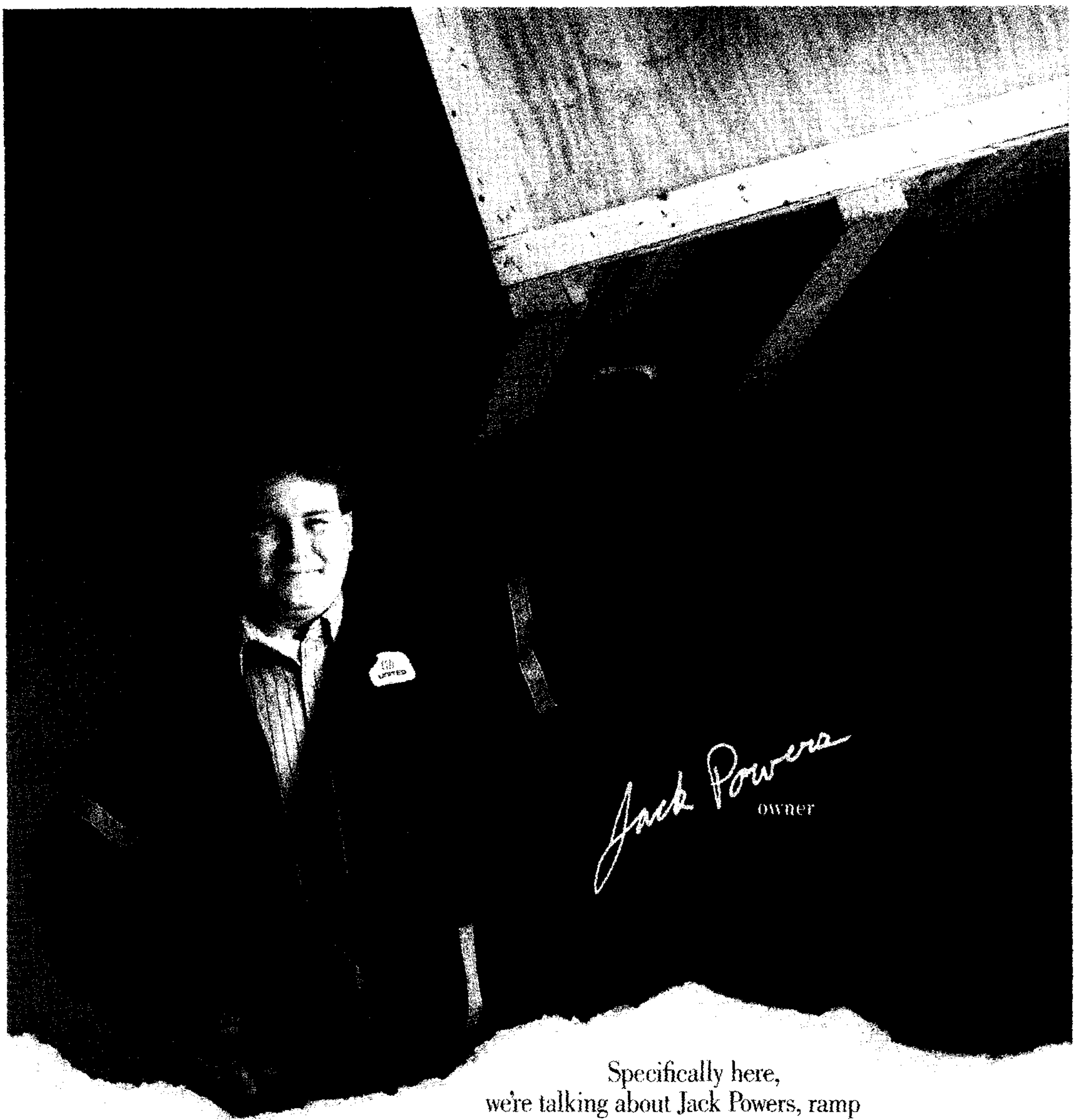

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